

BENJAMIN FULLER

and some of his

DESCENDANTS

1765-1958



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by

R. E. BANTA

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When advanced in life Washington himself made inquiries respecting his family. . . . The interest Washington felt was commendable. The study of genealogy is of the highest importance, as well to the individual as to the clan. The man who is indifferent as to his origin may be careless about his destiny. A contempt for the past is prophetic of the future. . . . The point of departure is linked with the ultimate point of arrival by not altogether unknown laws. The individual who would know whither he is going, may inquire with propriety whence he came."

—B. F. DeCosta

The Magazine of American History,
Vol. V, No. 1, July 1880, P. 83.



THIS is a sketch of Benjamin Fuller, farmer and mechanic once of Granville County, North Carolina, of his wife, Polly York Fuller, and of individual members of four generations of their descendants.

Here we shall trace, as well as we can from the scanty records, the curious pattern that has been followed and repeated through generations of Fuller descendants: we shall note their contributions to American society and view the sacrifices they have made and the hardships they have undergone through almost two centuries.

If the story of the Fullers proves anything, it is that there must be truth in the sometimes-derided adage, "blood will tell." The blood of Benjamin and/or his wife, Polly York Fuller, certainly *has* told in the demonstrated spirit and ability of their descendants.

The patterns of migration followed by the various branches of

the Fuller family are typical of those common to men of energy and ambition through the Eighteenth to Twentieth centuries. It has been curiously true in the United States—as it was not in Europe—that the family which remained stable in its original homesite has been more likely to stagnate than the one which dared to break old attachments to emigrate where the greatest agricultural or industrial opportunity offered.

In the American economy it has often been the rolling stone—within reason—that has tended to gather the moss.

The first move of the Fuller family's American rootstock was, of course, from England to the American Colonies, with settlement in North Carolina.

Thereafter two branches followed the popular early Nineteenth century routes; of North Carolina-Tennessee-Texas and North Carolina-Indiana: in the second case, however, there was a further remove in the second decade of the Twentieth century from Indiana to Louisiana. Few had moved from the Midwest to the South (except post-Civil War Carpetbaggers) up to this time. It was a wise move and has, since World War II, become quite common.

A third branch of the family followed still another pattern, North Carolina-Indiana-Illinois-New York.

When a Twentieth century Midwesterner moves east it is usually in search of advancement in either industry or the arts. This particular Fuller-descended emigrant followed industry—with singularly brilliant success.

So the Fullers, in their joint experience, seem to be largely typical of other families but were, in general, *early* typical. They helped to set a pattern in their removals. What they accomplished through two centuries shall be set down hereafter.

I

IN 1765 the attitude of the North American colonies was considered by their British proprietors to be growing daily more presumptuous. A great war against the French and Indians had recently ended and—in the course of winning it—the colonists had gained some independence of spirit; even a bit of arrogance. Already Americans were talking of their rights: the right to have a voice in the levy of taxes, to regulate their commerce and (greatest insolence of all) to make their own laws.

Few Englishmen, save the frequently inebriated and not too responsible Pitt, seem to have suspected it, but American colonials had only begun to be offensive. They would become still more so within the next turbulent eleven years.

It was in 1765 that Benjamin Fuller was born.¹

That is just about all we know of the gentleman for certain until his marriage in 1787. North Carolina colonial records are sparse and scattered because the Colonial Assembly was empowered to meet in any town it fancied and "seldom sat twice in succession in the same place. . . you could seldom visit the governor, the secretary, the treasurer or the comptroller in less riding than two or three hundred miles. Hence records

1. Statement of Louisa J. Fuller Morgan, granddaughter and the only descendant of Benjamin Fuller who knew him in life and left any written description of him. Ms. in the collection of Thomas J. Dillingham of Boonville, Ind. Benjamin Fuller spent his last twenty years in the home of Mrs. Morgan's father, where he died in 1848. Mrs. Morgan knew him to be 83 at the time of his death.

were lost, accounts were badly kept. . .”² In view of this fact, we may be fortunate to have gathered even such meager data as we have!

Benjamin later described himself as a “North Carolinian,” which would normally indicated that he was born in that state. Certainly he was there in 1787, when he was married,³ and all his children of whom there are any accounts described themselves as having been born in North Carolina.

But what of Benjamin’s progenitors?

At the time of his birth there were a number of Fullers within a radius of fifty miles of Oxford, Granville County, North Carolina, where Benjamin made his home in his mature years. Many of them were obviously not close family connections of Benjamin’s; but two Fullers, father and son, lived in the immediate neighborhood of Oxford and were of proper ages to have been Benjamin’s father and grandfather.

The older of these was Ezekiel Fuller, who began to buy land in Granville County in the year 1751, five years after it was organized, and the younger (proved by statements in public documents to have been Ezekiel’s son)⁴ was another Benjamin who began to buy land on his own account in 1762. Since a young man in those days did not ordinarily become a purchaser of land before he reached his majority, this Benjamin would have been at least twenty-four years old by the time the younger Benjamin was born.

Ezekiel, the father of the elder Benjamin, was probably an emigrant from England, as we shall see later.

Both Ezekiel and the elder Benjamin became fairly large land-holders in the region but both had left it by the year 1789, during which facts for the first United States Census were gathered.⁵ Our younger Benjamin’s name did not appear in

2. Morse, Jedediah—*The American Geography*, London 1794.

3. Marriage records in the Granville County court house, Oxford, N.C.

4. Register of deeds in the Granville County court house, Oxford, N.C.

5. Census of 1790. This first census included only the owners of real property. Neither of these Fullers appears in Granville County, although they had certainly been landholders previously.

that census either, although he was living in or near Oxford, was married and the father of at least one child. The omission would indicate that, in 1789, none of the three held land in his own name. Probably Ezekiel was dead, his years would have been far beyond the meager average expectancy of his day—as were even those of the elder Benjamin. Ezekiel and his son may have lost their lands during the exceedingly hard times that accompanied and followed the Revolutionary War, or they may simply have sold out and moved away.

If these two were father and grandfather of the Benjamin who interests us, we have one vague tradition that relates to their origin.

At the end of the Nineteenth century two grandsons of *our* Benjamin exchanged what data they had on the origin and history of their family.⁶ B. F. Fuller, a lawyer of Paris, Texas, wrote to his cousin, William Wilson Fuller of Boonville, Indiana, stating that he had heard very little about his grandfather Benjamin, since his own father had left North Carolina and gone west in his early youth. B. F. Fuller did recall that his father had mentioned uncles (they would have been brothers of our Benjamin) named Samuel—"said to have been a man of violent temper and in a fit of passion shot and killed a son"⁷—Ephraim, and Jordan. He stated that "there was a tradition in old Uncle Jordan's family that sometime before the time of our grandfather [Benjamin] there were three brothers came from England and landed, I think at Charleston, and after remaining there a while separated, by mutual consent, one going to North Carolina, one to New York and one remaining in South Carolina . . . from the one settling in North Carolina our family sprung. . ."

Another tradition preserved in the family of William Fuller (another son of Benjamin) states that "The Fuller family is of English origin, but representatives of the name removed to

6. Letters in the ms. collection of Thomas J. Dillingham.

7. The census of 1790, though it does not list either of the Benjamins or Ezekiel, does show a Samuel Fuller living in the county.

Dublin, Ireland, and thence came to America.”⁸ We may reasonably suppose that these “representatives” could well be the three brothers described by Jordan Fuller’s family.

We need only a bit of speculative latitude to assume that the North Carolina settler could have been Ezekiel; that he married, begat the elder Benjamin, the terrible-tempered Samuel, Ephraim, Jordan, and possibly other children, and eventually had *our* Benjamin, progenitor of the line of Fullers which interests us now, as a grandson.

Granville County, North Carolina, organized in 1746, originally included much of the area now within the confines of neighboring counties. All of this was part of a grant held by John Carteret, Earl Granville, who had been one of the original Carolina proprietors but had refused to join them in selling out to the British crown in 1728. In settlement, Lord Granville accepted a strip across the north border of North Carolina and Tennessee which also extended, the British government assured him, to the “South Seas” (meaning the Pacific Ocean). The western two thousand miles was of little use to the Earl but the strip of North Carolina included some of the best land in that Colony.⁹

Lord Granville operated his vast holdings *in absentia* and through agents who were, as a rule, honest neither with him nor his tenants. So corrupt were those agents, indeed, that some of the tenants staged a revolt that culminated in the horse-whipping of the worst of the agents and, in 1771, a full-scale riot which is referred to as the “Battle of Alamance”¹⁰ and might be considered a preliminary action of the American Revolution comparable to the Boston Tea-party, though on a smaller scale.

But Lord Granville carried out one policy that was not common to holders of feudal grants. Either in need of cash, as were so many of his fellow peers, or stirred by some faint

8. Robinson, George—*History of Green County, Ohio*.

9. E. M. Coulter—*The Granville District* in Vol. XII, No. 1, of the James Sprunt Historical Publications.

10. *Dictionary of American History*.

glimmer of the visions of free enterprise that were beginning to be seen in the New World, he began to sell tracts of land outright to those settlers who had the asked price. It was tracts of this kind that Ezekiel and the elder Benjamin Fuller were buying after 1751.

Even the strongest opponents of the nobility must have had to admit that purchasers from Granville got their money's worth. What is now Granville County, where the Fullers made their investments, is well above the North Carolina average as farm land. It is a gently rolling area of alternating red and gray-brown loam, then heavily timbered with pine and (predominating) various hardwoods. It is well-watered and, though there are swampy areas, they are small, widely scattered, and were probably more of an asset than a liability in the early days of settlement. This was never a land of great plantations and manor houses: there is no evidence among the oldest surviving buildings that present Granville County had more than substantial cottages occupied by people who farmed their own land with the aid of their sons: none of the census enumerations, 1790-1860, show many slaves there.

But even though Lord Granville sold good land at low prices, his agents managed to infuriate those who were tenants rather than buyers of his land. Probably they infuriated his Lordship as well but he, in England and with other problems on his mind, was unable to revolt as effectively. Ill-feeling continued, even after the catharsis of the Battle of Alamance, and during the troubled pre-Revolutionary period of 1774-75, delegates from Granville County played a prominent part in the various indignation meetings called in North Carolina; they "early took a decided stand for liberty."¹¹

(As far as *I* am concerned, I can not help but feel a little sympathy for John Carteret, Earl Granville, who seems to me to have been a man who was probably well-disposed. While I am glad that during the American Revolution the American

11. John W. Wheeler—*Historical Sketches of North Carolina from 1584 to 1851*.

Colonies had the nerve to confiscate his British grant—from the Atlantic to the “South Seas,” you remember—I am also happy to know that eventually the British crown indemnified his Lordship for the lands it had lost him!)

What part *our* Benjamin may have played in the Revolution we do not know. He should not have had to play any: if his only informed biographer is right, he was but eleven years old when it began. In 1781, when Cornwallis surrendered and fighting ended, he was sixteen. Men of sixty served in 1776-1781, and so did boys of sixteen (in fact all between those ages registered for militia duty) but neither were commonly engaged in combat. No one would ever have suspected that young Benjamin could have been a soldier in the American Revolution had not two of his third and fourth generation descendants felt an urge to join the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

Charles Clinton Shearer, of Xenia, Ohio, submitted an application to the Society which traced his ancestry correctly—

Son of John and Mary E. Fuller Shearer,
Grandson of William and Elizabeth Richards Fuller,
Great-grandson of Benjamin Fuller

—but which made Benjamin Fuller a “private, Graham’s New York Regt., Prisoner.”¹² In a statement published elsewhere Shearer referred to this Revolutionary veteran as Benjamin F. Fuller.¹³

In 1924, William Warren Johnson, of Jamestown, Ohio, a cousin of Shearer’s, also applied for membership in the Society. He stated in his application that his claim to descent from a soldier of the Revolution was based on Shearer’s but actually he elaborated upon Shearer’s ancestral line considerably, showing a Benjamin *Sr.* as the soldier and making the date of this Benjamin *Sr.*’s birth come just twenty-six years before that of Benjamin *Sr.*’s grandson! Even the virile young men who cast aside the British yoke seldom became grandfathers through

12. *National Register Sons of the American Revolution*, New York, 1902.

13. Robinson, George F.—*History of Greene County, Ohio*.

the male line at twenty-six. Johnson also assigned his and Shearer's supposed mutual ancestor to a different military outfit—though both agreed that he was captured by the enemy.

Now there actually *was* a Benjamin Fuller in Capt. Adiel Sherwood's New York Levies. He had been born, 1762, in Livingston Manor, N. Y., enlisted at Batten Kill, N. Y., in the summer of 1780, and died in Warren County, N. Y., in 1837¹⁴—but there is no evidence that he was the individual whom we know to have been Charles Clinton Shearer's great-grandfather (who died in Ohio in 1848) or the same, who was William Warren Johnson's great-great-grandfather.

Shearer's data is thus very dubious, while Johnson's is downright ludicrous: neither document seems to have a legitimate place in a factual study. Nevertheless Johnson's application contains some material that has interesting implications and some remarkable coincidences: we shall therefore set it forth in an appendix, wherein the pertinent and impertinent elements may receive suitable comment without breaking into our sequence of narrative here.¹⁵

Now we may return to the *known* life of the younger Benjamin (*our* Benjamin) of North Carolina about whom, from this forward, what data we have is positive and documented:

Wherever he may have been born, however he may have spent his youth, we know that on July 10, 1787, he was in Oxford, Granville County, North Carolina, for there, on that day, he married Polly York. The event was duly recorded by the proper authorities.¹⁶ They went to housekeeping immediately, probably within the limits of the little county seat town and in rented quarters—since we know by the United States Census that even two years later Benjamin did not own real property within the county.

Benjamin was later described by some of his grandchildren

14. United States Pension Roles.

15. For the data submitted for Sons of the American Revolution membership by Judge Shearer and Mr. Johnson see APPENDIX I.

16. Granville County marriage records, court house, Oxford, N.C.

as a "mechanic"—which, in his day and place of residence meant a blacksmith, gunsmith, millright, wheelright, or possibly a carpenter.

The degree of his prosperity as a young husband and father cannot be determined. None of his children mentioned any recollection of hardship. The amount of education they received proves nothing. Sometimes this was the gauge of a father's purse, during those times when there were no free schools and tuition had to be paid in cash or produce: if a man neglected the education of his older children but sent the younger ones to school we could assume that his financial condition was improving. That rule cannot be applied in the case of Benjamin Fuller and his children. Some of them had a good education in the fundamentals and were later able to improve themselves to a degree that made them distinguished for learning in the early days of Ohio and Indiana, while others remained illiterate through life. But this variation in the fortunes of Benjamin Fuller's children could not have been due to fluctuations, either in local opportunity for schooling or in their father's prosperity for, of two of Benjamin and Polly's sons born within the same calendar year, one became "a close student, a critical historian" while the other, although a man successful in business in his Nineteenth century day, "was not a literate man!"¹⁷

Benjamin Fuller and Polly York had been married on July 10, 1787. Their first child, christened Gideon Moody Fuller, was born on June 5, 1788. Other children of Benjamin and Polly—with the years of their births when they are known—were Green, Thomas (1791), John, William (1797), Isham (1798), Edmund (1798), Robin, Fanny, and Polly. (B. F. Fuller lists this son, John, from his father's admittedly meager communications to him. Inclusion of this John may have been an error, since he is not mentioned elsewhere, or he

17. These were Isham and Edmund, both born in 1798. The first quotation is from Isham's obituary, the second from a letter written by Edmund's son, B. F. Fuller, of Texas.

might have died in childhood: few parents in that septic age reared ten children of ten born.)

As we have seen, Benjamin Fuller owned no real property in North Carolina when that first census enumeration was carried on in 1789; but on November 9, 1798, he purchased a forty acre tract a few miles from Oxford "on Collingings Creek" from a certain Thomas York,¹⁸ who owned about seven hundred acres of land in what is now the northeast quarter of Granville County.¹⁹ It seems reasonable to assume that this Thomas York was grandfather, father, uncle, or brother to Benjamin's wife, Polly. Whatever the connection, Benjamin paid for his forty acres what appears to be, by comparison with contemporary transactions, a reasonable market price. (And he *paid it*, not just *promised* to pay it, for title was duly transferred.)

Apparently Benjamin and most of his numerous family lived on this farm thereafter until 1815. That forty acres was just about the right size farm for a man to handle—with the assistance of some growing sons but no slaves—especially when the man carried on his "mechanic's" trade as a side-line, as Benjamin probably did. Due to the subsequent re-routing of roads, the boundary changes wrought by purchase and repurchases, and the diversion of the course of creeks brought about by public ditching programs, it would be difficult today to locate the exact boundaries of the forty acres Benjamin bought and occupied, but the general locality of his farmstead is easy to find. It is a flourishing farm neighborhood, typical of the better sections of the county.

Whatever prosperity the Fullers enjoyed was not sufficient to preclude a desire on the part of the sons to move to a newer country when the chance came. By the year 1800 everyone, except the very wealthy and firmly established, had begun to talk about the north bank of the Ohio River. Many people (particularly those who did not own slaves and land in quantity) were already moving there from North Carolina,

18. Granville County recorded deeds, court house, Oxford, N.C.

19. Ray, Worth S.—*Colonial Granville County and Its People*.

Virginia—and even from Maryland and South Carolina.

The "Territory North-West of the River Ohio" was established by Congress in 1787: the ordinance that set it up forbade the holding of slaves and later acts made possible the purchase of public lands at low prices and in small tracts. There was also another method, besides purchase from the government, by which the emigrant could acquire land for a token payment: in certain restricted areas he could buy—sometimes for a few cents an acre, depending upon the need or thirst of the veteran—some of those land warrants that had been issued to Revolutionary soldiers by way of a bonus. Up north in this new land, thought the merchants, mechanics, professional men, and especially the small landholders who had felt themselves overshadowed in the slave-holding economy of the South, was the place to get ahead.

There had been squatters from the southern states on the north bank of the Ohio since a time shortly after the French and Indian War. When the "Territory North-West of the River Ohio" was established, these people became legal landholders and were joined by others. Soon there were enough settlers to warrant establishing Ohio as an individual territory and in 1803 it became a state—even though most of its northern half was still held by Indians—and its growth was further accelerated.

In the year 1811, the children of Benjamin Fuller began to join this migration. The eldest, Gideon Moody Fuller, then twenty-three years old, seems to have been first to go, or at least the leader of the first delegation of brothers. He had married Amy Solomon on January 17 of that year and in September they made the overland journey to Ohio by wagon. They must have followed one of the traces that led west from their old home to Cumberland Gap, then north along Boone's old road, and down the Licking River to the Ohio, for they told their daughter years later about crossing that river to Cincinnati on a "house boat."²⁰ Eventually they reached Wilmington,

20. Letters of Louisa J. Fuller Morgan.

Clinton County, where they bought government land at the going rate of \$1.25 per acre.

William, although only fourteen, apparently accompanied his brother and sister-in-law. He was certainly in Ohio a year or so later and a lone journey from North Carolina to Ohio would have been a bit unusual for even a frontier youth of his age—at least one beneath the stature of Simon Kenton.

Whoever went, 1811 was a bad year to move to the Ohio River valley. There the heavens were rendered terrifying all through the summer by showers of meteors; and the great Indian statesman, Tecumseh, was organizing the tribesmen of Ohio and Indiana Territory for a last attack designed to drive the whites back over the Eastern mountains. In November (Tecumseh being then in the South endeavoring to enlist the aid of the Creeks, Choctaws, and Cherokees), Indiana Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison raised a force and attacked Tecumseh's brother, The Prophet, at Tippecanoe, in Indiana. The Prophet's warriors were routed, but they immediately moved north and enlisted under the British in Canada for the approaching British-American War of 1812.

And those weren't the only dangers that could disturb a man recently removed from peaceful North Carolina; in December, 1811, only a few weeks after the Battle of Tippecanoe, nature took a hand in things and culminated her heavenly display of disturbing manifestations with an earthquake that shook the entire Midwest almost out of its collective wits.

In history it is called the "New Madrid Earthquake" because it did center on that town located on the west bank of the Mississippi not far below the mouth of the Ohio, but its effects were felt as far east as Pittsburgh. Quakes continued for weeks, the sky of the Ohio Valley was darkened by clouds of dust during most of the following year, and it is said that there was frost in almost every month throughout 1812. Naturally crops failed; naturally, also, the citizens were terrified. This terror was by no means alleviated by that fact that, by the end of the year, everyone was completely involved in the War of 1812 now being waged on the Great Lakes to the north and on the

Gulf of Mexico to the south. Young William Fuller—all of sixteen years of age—enlisted.

Chances are that having reached Ohio and seen these threats, Gideon warned his home folks to stay in North Carolina, at least for the present. Whatever he wrote or failed to write, no more of his brothers or sisters seem to have followed him north until 1815, when there appears to have been a general exodus. Again we refer to the letters of B. F. Fuller who, though he believed he had little contribution to make, still furnished several footnotes to family history not found elsewhere:

"Benjamin Fuller . . . lived in Granville County, North Carolina, near Oxford, and was a farmer, About the year 1815 he lost his house and pretty much all he had by a destructive fire, and it seems the family scattered. . ."

It was almost certainly then that B. F. Fuller's father, Edmund (a youth of seventeen) made his way west into Tennessee, while Isham (born in the same calendar year) and Thomas (twenty-four) came north. These latter two undoubtedly stopped in Ohio to visit their brother Gideon and then passed on to Warrick County, Indiana, where their arrival in 1816 is noted by many reliable sources.

Green Fuller also came north but he waited until the next year, and we know why: Granville County records show that on December 6, 1816, he married Nana Heflin at Oxford,²¹ After the wedding, Green and Nana came first to Indiana but eventually moved on to make their permanent home in Illinois.

Robin Fuller visited his brother Gideon many years after, in 1847, so we know he survived into middle age but we do not know where he had made his home in the meantime. Polly (one of the two daughters of Benjamin and Polly) also survived and her niece implies that she probably lived in Ohio: whether she married or exactly where she lived is not known.²²

Thus we have accounted definitely for Benjamin Fuller's children, Gideon, William, Edmund, Isham, Thomas, and

21. Granville County marriage records, court house, Oxford, N.C.

22. Letters of Louisa J. Fuller Morgan.

Green, and we know that Robin and Polly kept in touch with their kin. Fannie remains, and family tradition has it that she died while still a young woman; of John Fuller, who possibly also died in youth, nothing is known.

Apparently Benjamin did not flee the scene of his financial embarrassment so incontinently as did his sons. He wisely stayed in Granville County until, in 1828, transportation by stage and steamboat being available, he could comfortably move to Ohio to make his future home with his son, Gideon, at Wilmington. By then, all those five northern-moving sons we have mentioned—Gideon, William, Isham, Thomas, and Green—were long since comfortably established in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

In 1828, Benjamin was sixty-three years old, an age at which, in pioneer times in the Midwest and South, a man expected to move in with his eldest son to spend his declining years. Gideon was prospering, but such a move on the part of the old gentleman by no means implies that he received charity; an elderly man could always make himself useful in the semi-rural economy that existed even among the cow-owning aristocracy of Manhattan, and he usually did so.

There is no further mention of the good Polly in family tradition, written or otherwise. She may be presumed to have died in her late fifties in North Carolina, as wives of her day were prone to do, after bearing and rearing ten children. This might very well have been the immediate reason for Benjamin's remove to the north.

In any case Benjamin came to the home of his son, Gideon, twenty years before the time at which he was to die. There he lived, much loved by his descendants (certainly by his granddaughter Louisa J., who emphatically so states), until he passed away in 1848.

That is Benjamin Fuller's story—or rather that is all we have been able to glean from the few facts that are of record. We know that any man of his experience in those days of stirring glory had much more to tell than we shall ever hear.

II

SO Benjamin Fuller passed away. His must have been an interesting life—whether he actually fought in the Revolution or simply lived through it (which, in itself, required a rugged constitution and considerable fortitude), he contributed years of hard work and ten sons and daughters to the new country. Hard work and husky young folks were the two commodities which (with the rich natural assets that no European had been able to appreciate until he himself had emigrated and lived among them for a while) had before Benjamin's death made the United States a world power.

It is unfortunate that we know so little of Benjamin's younger years and of his and his wife's ancestral background, but unquestionably they made their contribution. It is now time to look at the lives of their children and *their* children, especially at their son Isham and *his* remarkable get, who shall chiefly interest us hereafter:

This is the picture as it composed itself in the early day: as we have seen, Gideon Moody Fuller and his bride, Amy, had left North Carolina long since and moved to the new Territory of Ohio. We will not presume to picture the travail involved in their passage thence: their daughter thought they made the several hundred miles of mountain road by wagon. That would be at best: at worst they packed their belongings on whatever horse—or horses—they owned and walked alongside.

Anyway the Gideon Fullers had reached the Ohio at the mouth of the Licking River, got themselves and their goods

ferried over to infant Cincinnati on that afore-mentioned "house boat" and walked (or rode, if you insist) forty miles to Wilmington, in the backcountry. One assumes that, when Cincinnati was "infant," Wilmington was a primordial foetus.

In that Indian-threatened region Gideon signed up at the nearest Government Land Office to buy a quarter-section or even a section of land. Let us not waste any sympathy on Gideon: whatever land he bought was good for general purposes—far better than his forebears had ever seen in North Carolina—and under the new laws it cost him \$1.25 an acre, on payments. Long before Gideon went to meet his Maker, that land could conceivably bring \$100 an acre, even at forced sale. In his later years Gideon also became a curer of cancers—by the Indian root and herb method presumably—and was sought out by sufferers from far and wide.¹ Please do not doubt his cures too hastily: Indian methods have been "rediscovered" in other fields: there is, for instance, penicillin!²

But Gideon's profit is his fortune and our never-mind. In 1812 he had just come to the new country provided with a young Carolina wife. He was about to set up a new family; what was more he was prepared to attract some of his hearty Carolinian relatives to the new land.

First, of course, was his brother William. William was only fourteen in 1811, when Gideon made his trek. As we have noted William very likely came along *with* Gideon and Amy. In any case he joined them within about a year and, a full-scale war beginning on the new frontier, he joined up.

William Fuller had the choice of enlisting in General William Henry Harrison's force for the northern campaign or in that of Andrew Jackson for the southern. Probably he had soon heard, in Ohio, of the manner in which the handsome, forceful, Tecumseh had faced-down General Harrison at Vincennes. William chose to join Andy Jackson. Jackson was and

1. Letters of Louisa J. Fuller Morgan.

2. Mexican semi-civilizations used earth moulds to heal wounds at the time of their discovery by the Spanish—who immediately forbid the practice as "heathen!"

always had been a roisterer—but no Indian *or* white had ever faced him down. In a Tennessee regiment William fought through the campaign at Pensacola and was “within sound of the guns” when Jackson defeated the British at New Orleans. He probably never had cause to regret this choice of leaders, for the southern campaign was a much more satisfying experience to participants than was that around the Great Lakes. The war over, William came back and settled permanently in Ohio.

As far as we know, Gideon Moody Fuller saw no active service in the War of 1812. He can't be accused of shirking his duty by any reasonable person: he had come north only a few months before the opening of the war, bringing with him a young wife. He had bought lands (the country was as badly in need of the produce of land and of tax revenue as it was of soldiers—more so, perhaps) and his young wife was pregnant—William (II) was born during 1812, the year fighting began on an official basis. Those facts should excuse him from military service although we do not *know* that he did not serve in spite of them.

During the next three years, fighting continued both along the Atlantic seaboard and in the West—and at very least Gideon continued meanwhile to clear his new land, to care for his family, and to raise crops which helped to secure the existence of the troops of which his brother William now was one.

Before the war was over, or by the time it was, Gideon had at least two more brothers in the Ohio country. Young Isham certainly came north by 1816, probably Thomas came with him; then, shortly after, came Green and his bride, Nana. By the time of their arrival the West was at peace but there was still a pressing need for field-grown crops, such as farm-bred young northern North Carolinians were well-suited to supply.

Whatever the schedule, the later arrivals soon passed down the Ohio River (either working their way on flatboat or barge or rowing a borrowed john-boat) to the heavily timbered lands of newly-surveyed Warrick County, Indiana. When Indiana

became a state in 1816—also called “a year of no summer,” as had been 1812— Isham and Thomas were probably on hand to enjoy the jollification that marked the Indiana admission ceremonies. They may even have made the trip from Warrick County to the first Indiana capital at Corydon to attend the major state festivities. It is only eighty-two miles from Boonville, seat of Warrick County, to Corydon—a mere nothing to experienced travelers such as these youths had become.

Young Isham had learned a trade of some sort. There are occasional later reference to him as a “farmer and *mechanic*,” and it is most likely that he followed whatever trade it was for at least a few years after he came to Indiana.

That would have been the wise thing to do—to follow the trade, earn a little captial, and then buy government land—and Isham Fuller in later life showed himself to be a wise man. In those days, still as in those of Benjamin Fuller, a “mechanic” was usually either blacksmith, gunsmith, wheelright, millright, or carpenter. If the family tradition is correct and his father, Benjamin, had been one of these, then Isham was doubtless the same.³ Quite soon he was able to buy some land, probably some part of that farm located seven miles north of Boonville which was to be his home in later years.

The fact that Isham had had some education is evidenced by the statement made at the time of his death by some contemporary commentator that he was “A representative man in many particulars. . . He was a close student, a critical historian, and a very careful investigator of the Scriptures. He was passionately fond of studying the Bible and history, and, being a good conversationalist as well as a public speaker, he was often sought out by his many friends . . . for his opinions on these and kindred subjects. He was a strong, well-built, athletic man physically, but a very peaceable and quiet citizen. He seemed to fill a niche in the history of his adopted state, and

3. Gov. Ratliff Boon, a Warrick County neighbor of Isham Fuller's, was a gunsmith and was accustomed to repair his constituents' weapons while electioneering. Mechanics were popular, important and useful citizens on the frontier.

did her good service at various times. . . .”⁴ He not only taught a Bible class in his early days, but, according to his youngest daughter, Hannah Maria Fuller Cherry, he took a turn at teaching the neighborhood grammar school when one of the bibulous and undependable backwoods teachers deserted his post unexpectedly. His early activities in his new home indicate a character certainly serious of purpose—fortified by a basic grounding in the “Three R’s.”

Quite a differing sort during those first years in wild, backwoods, Indiana was Thomas, Isham’s older brother and companion in emigration. A sketch of Thomas appears in a book on the Baptist Church of the southern part of the state which portrays him as, if not a completely admirable character, at least a normal young man of the frontier in his day who later rose to meet his responsibilities. Says the author, a man reared in the locality:

“One of the earliest converts, near Boonville, was *Thomas Fuller*. Concerning him, Mr. Reavis, who was well acquainted with him says: ‘He was a wild, rollicking, drinking man. Up to the time of his conversion, he was regarded as one of the most incorrigibly hardened of all men in that neighborhood. If there were any horse-racing or shooting matches in the neighborhood, he was always relied on to be there. And if there were any fighting or rowdyisms going on near him, he nearly always made one of the number.

“ ‘But this man, now about thirty five years old, went to hear Elder Benoni Stinson preach. It was a strange thing to see him at meeting but more strange than ever, to see him bowed down as a mourner, asking the prayers of God’s people in his behalf. But such was the result, and he was converted. This wild man, that had hitherto been fierce and almost a terror to good people, was now clothed upon as with a garment of salvation, and like one of old seemed to be sitting at *the* feet of Jesus, in his right mind.

4. Lane, Rev. J. C.—*Benoni Stinson and the General Baptists*. pp. 96 et seq.

" 'He had no learning, did not know one letter from another. He could neither read nor write. His wife could, and she was a Christian. He sat daily at her feet, and listened to her read the scriptures. He committed whole chapters to memory; and what is more wonderful than all, he began to preach. He was licensed in 1827, and was ordained two years afterwards. He preached with such power and success as to surprise everybody. His quotations of scripture were nearly always accurate, and his manner of explaining difficult texts was astonishing. He continued to go on and prosper, building up churches wherever he went.

" 'He was a large man, about five feet ten inches high, with a broad chest, weighed about two hundred pounds, had a finely shaped head and face, and a very heavy brain.⁵ His memory was extraordinary, and he had a strong voice. He was Pastor of Mt. Gilead Church most of the time from September 1834, until 1852, and also attended two or three other churches at the same time. He seldom ever failed to preach once or twice every Sunday when he was well. He presided at the business meetings of the churches he attended with dignity, and exhibited much parliamentary knowledge. His manners were sweet and gentle, and his company was sought by many of the learned and influential men of the country. In short he was the most popular and influential man I ever knew, to be unlearned as he was.

" 'He took great delight in performing the rite of baptism, and immersed many hundreds. He never received much pay for his services, but labored on his farm with his own hands; and not only made a support for himself and family, but often gave money to other ministers who visited his neighborhood.

" 'His disposition was cheerful and happy, indeed he was witty, and at times a jester. For many years he had attacks of rheumatism, which were very painful. He bore all these with

5. Ibid. Recall that the Rev. Mr. Lane was accumulating his notes at the height of the phrenology craze, a fad which swept the country in the mid-Nineteenth century even as psychoanalysis is sweeping it now.

a courage and fortitude that seemed almost superhuman. He was born July 6, 1791 and died August 25, 1857, universally beloved by a host of friends. As pastor, husband, father and friend he fulfilled his duties with alacrity. His influences for good will not soon be forgotten.'

"My first recollection of Uncle Thomas Fuller was hearing him preach in a protracted meeting at Old Providence Church, in Warrick County, Indiana. He possessed an extraordinary memory. His wife, or some of his children, would read for him, and he would commit what he heard read to memory. He had quite a number of the old hymns thus committed to memory, and I have heard him repeat whole chapters without making a single mistake. Strange as it may appear he was a strong doctrinal preacher and a good revivalist."

Not only do we have printed testimony as to the character of the two young Fullers who settled in Indiana but we also know something of the situation of the locality within a couple of years of their arrival.

Until 1818 Warrick also included present Vanderburgh County. In the year 1812 the notoriously boisterous Hugh McGary of Kentucky had built a cabin on land adjoining the site where, in 1816, General Robert M. Evans and James W. Jones would lay out the now important river city of Evansville, Indiana. McGary had been a contemporary of Daniel Boone in Kentucky and it was McGary's ill-timed and self-appointed leadership that lured his and Boone's fellow-Kentuckians to the terrible destruction they experienced at the Battle of Blue Licks.⁶ If McGary, first distinguished settler in what was then Warrick County, set the social tone of the neighborhood it is no wonder that youthful Thomas Fuller tended toward "rollicking" and "incorrigibility." He must have been quite in the current mode.

The Warrick County locality was wild enough by nature, regardless of its inhabitants. In January, 1818, Elias Pym Fordham, a young Englishman who was engaged in improving a farm at the English Prairie settlement in southeastern Illinois,

6. Banta, R. E.—*The Ohio*.

just across the Wabash River from Indiana, set off for Cincinnati by way of Vincennes over one of the traces that crossed the southern part of the Hoosier state. Fordham's journal gives a picture of conditions in southern Indiana at the time. Having ridden south from Vincennes, he says—

"Slept at Bar's between the forks of White River." [That would be somewhere near the present village of Sandy Hook, now famous for good melons.] Road dreadfully bad. The Prairie, or rather barren, for it is covered with shrubs, is pretty good land lying on clay, which gets so soft in wet weather that the horse's foot sinks deep into it. Once my horse sunk in the plain up to his chest, and rolled over.

"Snow in evening.

"Crossed the East fork of White River and slept at Dr. A——'s . . . I made myself comfortable here and slept, for the first time in many months, between a pair of sheets. . .

"It is reported that 250 warriors are assembled on the headwaters of White River, to avenge the deaths of some men, who have been murdered. . . Judge —— overtaking me, informed me that the road to Cincinnati through Indiana was too bad to be traveled with safety. I then changed my route and set off with him. . . America is not a land of prospects. . . It is seldom that a view of 200 yards in extent can be caught in Indiana. . . The live poplar, or tulip-bearing tree. . . the sycamore, the walnut, and the white oak, grow to a prodigious size. . ."

A couple of days later Fordham and his companion reached—

"French-lick Creek" [in the late Nineteenth Century to become Tom Taggart's well known spa, gambling center, and political smoke-filled-room] where we dressed and warmed ourselves and hired a guide to take us to a fordable crossing. We carried our blankets and saddle bags in our arms and walked over a fallen tree, which tottered high in the air. . . and our guide drove our horses after us through the river. This young man was a cripple, and the second I have seen [during almost two years] in the Western Country. Deformity is rare among the Backwoodsmen, as it is among the Indians.

"We slept at Mr. H——'s on —— Creek, a substantial Indiana farmer. He came home while we were at supper, with three of his neighbors who were completely armed. They had been to take some men to Paoli gaol [Paoli was and is the seat of Orange County, which Fordham and the Judge had then reached] for robbing a store on Little Blue River. They informed us that there were a gang of brigands on that river who lived by passing forged notes, stealing horses &c., and hunting. They had a strong rock house among the hills, and it was said three or four guns apiece. One of Mr. H——'s guests wanted to raise the whole force . . . and to make an attack on the rock house before daylight. But more prudent councils prevailed."⁷

Mr. Fordham went on to Cincinnati and thereafter he was out of the territory that interests us.

Thanks to the recollections of the Rev. Mr. Lane and the Rev. Mr. Reavis we have a concise sketch of Thomas Fuller, his early misdeeds and his later redemption: Isham Fuller's life followed a more complicated pattern marked by achievements of a more important sort.

There is an easily reconizable relationship between Isham's life, through the decade after 1816, and that of a younger boy living fifteen miles to the east in an adjoining county: the younger boy was the son of a recent emigrant to Indiana from Kentucky who had chosen to settle on some of the poorest land available in the state. The family name was Lincoln—the son was called Abraham.

Isham Fuller, born in north-central North Carolina (a country in which education was then held in regard less high, perhaps, than in some other sections) in the year 1798, had nevertheless obviously been exposed to the rudiments of the

7. Fordham, Elias Pym—*Personal Narrative of Travels*. For some unfathomable reason a British traveler of the Nineteenth century in the United States was always able to identify a host who entertained him, free of charge but with facilities found unsatisfactory, by his full name—sometimes with complete mailing address: if, however, the host provided a well cooked dinner and clean sheets the British cousin usually identified him in the inevitable reminiscence only by his initials or a cryptogram. Fordham's reference to "Dr. A——'s" hospitality is typical.

"Three R's" in his childhood. There could have been little more than merely rudiments. He had come north as a young man not more than seventeen or eighteen, mature in body and probably even the master of a trade, but innocent of anything resembling wide reading or culture, as that nebulous stuff is gained from books.

Young Abraham Lincoln, born in a not-overly-polished section of Kentucky, had been brought to Indiana as a boy of seven and had acquired his introduction to those same rudimentary "Three R's" locally.

By the year 1822 both of these, Isham Fuller, a young man then twenty-four and Abraham Lincoln, an adolescent of thirteen, found themselves neighbors and similarly situated. Both could read but they had no books; both knew that there were things to be learned but they had no one to guide them to learning. Our jovial, roistering friend Thomas Fuller—who had not learned to read at all and was thus not exposed to doubts—solved *his* problem by marrying an educated Christian young woman and lived to do honor to his native good sense: his brother Isham, and that gangling son of Thomas Lincoln's, could not bring themselves to such a compromise. *They* wished to learn for themselves—and only difficult paths were open to them.

It is probable that both took the same one. Already there had been, even in the wilds of southern Indiana, an infiltration of men of some learning; men who owned books and read them. These learned gentlemen of property were less easy to approach than were those who had only land and horses to sell or daughters to marry off, but such a difficulty would not deter young men infected with the virus of learning. Those formidable gentlemen had books that could be borrowed and, though it took more daring to ask permission to borrow a book than to marry an heiress on the frontier, the challenge alone was enough to attract a young man who could read, and who saw the value in reading.

Monographs by the dozen have been written on the reading fare enjoyed by Abraham Lincoln during the Eighteen-twenties

in intellectually desolate south-central Indiana. Always listed are the *Bible*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Weem's Life of Washington* and an anonymous history of the United States. Since Isham Fuller is characterized in later life as a "lover of biblical and historical literature" it is entirely possible that he cut his teeth as a reader on the same works. Indeed, in view of the propinquity of their homes, it is entirely possible that both borrowed books from the same literate citizen of Rockport, Indiana. Abraham and Isham each resided about seventeen miles distant from that town, though in directions diverging nearly sixty degrees. Chances are very good that the two young men actually met sometimes on Warrick County court days, for Lincoln early got the habit of walking to Boonville to attend court—it was in the Warrick County court house, indeed, that a thrilling trial decided him in favor of studying law.⁸ Everyone within walking distance attended court in those days, for the judges, lawyers, and litigants not only furnished a big free show, spring and fall, but the sessions were also, by general agreement, public market time. That was true of Boonville, as elsewhere—except in cold weather when the unfinished courthouse was not habitable.⁹

The tentative association of Fuller and Lincoln because of their reading habits is not far-fetched, in spite of the differences in their ages. In that day a thirst for knowledge was not universal in Indiana—or in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, or even, Heaven knows, in the sacred New England states! Two young men of such similar tastes, attending the same court and market, could scarcely avoid being aware of each other.

With their passion for self-instruction the similarity between Abraham Lincoln and Isham Fuller ended. Young Lincoln depended upon infinitesimal wages as a day laborer for what

8. Hill, Frederick Trevor—*Lincoln the Lawyer*. It is a speculation worthy only of a footnote but, if Hill is right, we may easily suppose that Lincoln was present in 1823 when Fuller and his associates awarded "ten dollars in good trade" to Joseph Camp to recompense him for his "second rate cow,"—a case on which we will presently report.

9. Fortune, Will—*Warrick and Its Prominent People*.

money he had. His father, while not as poor by local standards as he has been represented, was of little help toward furthering his son's ambition. Isham, on the other hand, seems to have been prospering even at that time.

On December 8th, 1821, Isham Fuller married a young widow, also an emigrant from North Carolina, whom he is believed to have known in his boyhood. The widow of John McMurtry, who died after moving to Indiana in 1820, Amelia Hudson McMurtry was the daughter of Isaac Hudson, a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Born in 1791, she was seven years older than her second husband and had four children at the time of their marriage. Little else is known of her except that she was a member of the Baptist congregation, as is evidenced by the fact that she and Isham named their only son, born in 1825, after the famous Baptist minister, Benoni Stinson, whom we have already mentioned in connection with the conversion of Isham's brother Thomas. Before her death in 1849 she and Isham had a total of four children, Benoni and three daughters, Lepina Jane, Rachael, and Sarah. Amelia Fuller was described as "very devout," a woman of "sympathy and tenderness," and was held in high regard in the Warrick County community.

It is safe to assume that the Fullers took up residence on their farm at the time of their marriage or shortly thereafter.

At least by the time of his marriage, Isham had joined the state militia—in view of the interest in military matters he showed throughout his life he probably enlisted as soon as he arrived in Indiana—and to the affairs of that then all-important organization he gave long years of service far beyond the call of duty. Until Isham Fuller himself led in its reorganization while serving in the state legislature, documents relating to the Indiana Militia are incomplete or nonexistent so that his service cannot be accurately traced but he achieved the rank of Brigadier General by 1846. Contemporaries remember him as having borne, throughout his life, a reputation for ability to give rapid and thorough training to new recruits.¹⁰ This commission

10. Thomas Dillingham ms. notes.

of his was no courtesy title, like that of a Kentucky "Colonel." It was based upon service and was as legitimate as a governor of Indiana could issue.¹¹

Fuller's qualifications as a man of intelligence and probity were soon recognized by neighbors; certainly by his thirtieth year he was one of the community's recognized elders. Fifty-nine years later, on March 26, 1887, the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER began a series of articles by one C. Kirkpatrick that dealt with pioneer days in Warrick County:

"We now have in our possession the first justice's docket used in Hart township after its organization. . . in 1823. . . . It is a rare and precious document, and a number of persons who figured as prominent citizens of the county at that early date appeared in his court both as plaintiffs and defendants, we propose to lay before the readers of the ENQUIRER from time to time a few of the pithy and hotly contested trials contained therein. . .

"Joseph W. Camp)

V.S.)

Isaac Leete)

debt due by account \$10.00. Summons issued June, the 24th day 1828—The partys met and the defendant put the trial off by making oath, according to law, and set the day of trial on the 12th day of July 1828. The parties met and the case being fully investigated and . . . John Hart, Thomas Archer, John Taylor, Isham Fuller, Tubby Bloyd, as arbitrators agree that Isaac Leete pay Joseph Camp ten dollars in good trade rateing equal to a second rate cow at ten dollars to be paid on or before the first day of November next. It is therefore considered that Joseph Camp recover of Isaac Leete the sum of ten dollars, with cost of suit, in mercy & etc. June 24, 1828, Judgement credited by note given plaintiff for the debt. . .

"We give this case from the fact of the novelty of it in rendering a judgement for a debt to be paid in personal property as stated therein, rating it equal to a second rate cow at 'Ten

11. INDIANA STATE SENTINEL, June 6, 1846.

dollars.' But when we take in consideration the fact that at one time in the history of Indiana we had a statute making coon skins and venison hams a legal tender in the payments of debt and for taxes, there is nothing very novel therein, and then, too, many old citizens will call in remembrance the names of the arbitrators as being among the leading and good citizens of the county, for instance the name of the *Honorable Isham Fuller* who in early days was welcomed by every man, woman and child as an honorable citizen . . . who represented the county in the State Legislature for a term of several years, and father of Hon B. S. Fuller, the good citizen and able and worthy representative of the first district of the State in the National Congress. . . " ¹²

If any doubts as to Isham Fuller's popularity existed in the minds of those residents of Warrick County who were, say, of Methodist and Whig leanings instead of Baptist and Democratic as he was, they would have been dispelled by an event that occurred in the spring of 1842.

As a rule it has never, from the very beginning, been necessary to *persuade* Hoosiers to run for public office. Usually, except under the most absolutely hopeless circumstances, at least half a dozen candidates find themselves called by some Higher Force to announce for every place open on a ticket. When, ever so infrequently, the office seeks the man it is a matter suitable for comment and for wonder.

Such an experience came to Isham Fuller.

A seat in the House of the Indiana State Legislature was vacant in 1842. Undoubtedly there were plenty of Warrick County politicians who would have been delighted to earn even the modest per diem then received by Indiana Representatives but the populace of the county would have none of them. (Such occasional flashes of genius are the hope of democratic government.) In the spring, after some preliminary conferences, a large delegation of county voters—by no means all Democrats—gathered together and came on horseback to

12. BOONEVILLE ENQUIRER, issues of Mch. 26 and June 11, 1887.

Isham's farm home. Rallying in his front yard, spokesmen persuaded him to run for the Legislature on the Democratic ticket. He accepted the invitation and was duly nominated.

That fall he was elected.

In Warrick County then, and for many years after, a nomination on the Democratic ticket fairly assured election but the party in the state as a whole was in a turmoil. Throughout the six years Isham Fuller rode the bottomless mud roads to and from the new capital at Indianapolis, Indiana, Democrats were torn by a fight for control in which the chief contestants were dissolute Edward Allen Hannegan, grafting old General John Tipton, and upright but politically unfortunate General Tilghman A. Howard. Either of the first two were ready to sell out to the opposition—and frequently did—for personal gain: the third, Howard, was bitterly hated by Hannegan and Tipton and was too honest to compete with them successfully.

The result of these intra-party enmities (and of General William Henry Harrison's great popularity as a candidate for the Presidency) was that Indiana had a Whig governor from 1841 to 1844. He was not a strong executive: even a usually complacent contemporary biographer described him as possessing "talent not of the highest order" but "a good bass singer and a skillful performer on the violin." That, in a sketch of Samuel Bigger as a statesman, constitutes faint praise indeed! ¹³

When Bigger took office the state was bankrupt, or very nearly so, due to previous wildcat operations in the field of internal improvements. Canals, roads, dubious river channel improvements, and expensive building operations undertaken with a light—perhaps artful—spirit by earlier Indiana Assemblies were bringing in little revenue and their upkeep was proving proportionately more costly than their original construction. There were widespread demands, from that class of irresponsible citizens who seem always to be with us, for repudiation of the state debts. At least those debts were not

13. Woollen, William Wesley—*Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana*.

repudiated during Bigger's administration but neither was any solution found by which they might be paid off or even re-financed.

Parts of the Wabash and Erie Canal had been opened for navigation by 1835, after years of planning, argument and actual construction. Throughout the next two decades, the canal was extended. It did bring about an easier access to farm produce markets, and it raised the value of lands in counties it served, but the canal never operated at a profit. Before it reached the ultimate terminal for which it had aimed—the Ohio River near Evansville—canal transportation had become obsolete and lack of funds for maintenance had already caused stretches of the completed line to return to the mud from which they had been so painfully and expensively dug.

The fortunes of other Indiana canals, the Central Canal of Indiana, the Whitewater and less grandiosely planned waterways, were either much less or little more happy.

In 1836 the Indiana State Legislature, inspired by a vision of progress and prosperity, adopted a further scheme of Internal Improvements designed to put in the shade such earlier "public improvements" as canals and corduroy roads. *This* Legislature proposed no less an undertaking than the construction of a sure-enough railroad from Madison to Indianapolis, and work was begun.

By 1842 the railroad offered a service of sorts from Madison north to Scipio, quite a walk south of Indianapolis, and the state's share of the expense for building and equipping the first twenty-eight miles had amounted to over a million and a half dollars. That, circa 1836-1842, was a very sizable amount of money indeed: especially so since no tangible return could be foreseen by any but the most starry-eyed of railroad promoters.

It became the unpleasant duty of those legislators serving in 1843-44 to look the facts squarely in the eye before Indiana became totally and eternally insolvent. Under the administration of Governor James Whitcomb, Bigger's successor, they did so. They voted to accept the state's losses to date and to write them off; to turn these new-fangled sources of fiscal

misery over to private companies— at whatever loss was indicated by the market.

Had the legislators of the winter of 1843-44 done nothing more during their respective terms of office than relieve Indiana of this burden of misguided public works they would have earned themselves the gratitude of all Hoosiers to come.

Representative Fuller, even though he came from one of the poorer counties, spoke consistently, both in public and in private through his term as a legislator, against anything but an honest meeting of state obligations.

It is not surprising that in his first term under Bigger, a Whig governor, and such divided Democratic sentiment, Representative Fuller received no important committee assignments. That failure might even be considered an evidence of his probity, in view of the condition of his own party's leadership at the time.¹⁴ It was, indeed, generally so considered: Isham Fuller was remembered in Indiana through two generations by Democrats, Whigs and Republicans alike, as one *disinterested* politician.

Duly elected to the Indiana House of Representatives and certified, Fuller had made the one hundred and sixty-five mile ride to Indianapolis. If he was able to complete that trip in less than six days he either had the advantage of frozen roads or a better than average horse.

On the morning of December 5, 1842, he appeared at the handsome Greek-revival Indiana Statehouse (which had begun to crumble away almost before the paint was on) to answer the first roll call. His presence, with his fellows, was duly recorded in the pages of the INDIANA STATE SENTINEL, from which we will hereafter glean most of the facts of his subsequent career in the House.

Having no commitments to either the Democratic Party or intra-party factions, Representative Fuller wisely began his career by looking after the interests of his own home Warrick County and the constituents who had elected him to office. On

14. Esarey, Logan—*A History of Indiana from Its Exploration to 1850*: Banta, R. E.—ms. *Rake's Progress: The Life of Edward Allen Hannegan*.

the fourth day of the session he introduced a bill designed "to change the mode of doing county business in Warrick." The measure was "referred to the committee on the Judiciary." The following week he presented "a memorial" which the SENTINEL does not describe.

One may doubt that Isham was able to go back home to Warrick County to spend Christmas with Amelia and his children. The ride to Boonville was too long to be accomplished, both ways, before the Legislature resumed sitting after a brief adjournment. Whether or not Isham went home for Christmas, he was certainly back in Indianapolis on December 29th, for on that day he presented what, with an amendment, became his first measure of statewide importance. It related to education, in which Isham was always interested, and it proposed "authorizing the prosecuting Attorney of the 4th Circuit to enter a *nolle prosequi* in certain cases, in the county of Warrick. It was read twice, when

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"Mr. Butler of V[anderburgh] moved to strike it out and insert an amendment, making the bill applicable wherever officers have been indicted for violating the law of last winter, respecting return of money by them collected, to be applied for purposes of education; which amendment was adopted and the bill read a third time and passed."

Representative Fuller was backing public education—first in Warrick County but incidentally in other regions, should the others choose to join him.

On January 7th and 11th, Representative Fuller presented measures of a local nature. (Many an item of business came before a state legislature in that era which would now be settled in circuit court or even before a justice of the peace: divorces were granted by an act of legislature, for instance, and line-fence disputes were decided. The legislator who introduced measures for such purposes was not wasting the taxpayer's money, therefore, but only serving a function to which he was committed by law: it was the law-maker who scamped such duties who was at fault.)

The Indiana State Legislature had another duty in that day,

too, and its function during Representative Fuller's first term provided one of the most talked-about episodes in Indiana legislative history:

It occurred during a joint session of the Indiana House and Senate that, in Fuller's day—and afterwards until popular sentiment objected to the vote-buying and general, free-wheeling, skulduggery that resulted—was empowered to elect those United States Senators who represented the state at Washington.

An Indiana senator was to be chosen in January, 1843, and, while the story of his selection has no direct bearing on this sketch of Isham Fuller, it does show the operation of politics in his day: the insignificant incidents that influenced national government and national policies, and the obstacles which custom and complacency then placed in the way of the legislator who had taken office with only the worthy aims of representing his constituents, seeing that justice was done to the majority of his party and serving his state and his nation.

That January there were two major, qualified, candidates for the senatorial seat. One was Oliver Hampton Smith, a Whig who then held one of the two Indiana senatorial seats. Smith's morals and record were beyond reproach, although he was a trifle on the sanctimonious side and had, unquestionably, a talent for irritating many of the commonality with whom he came in contact. The other was that General Tilghman A. Howard mentioned heretofore, Democrat of unquestioned standards, of political experience—gained, with his military title, in Tennessee before he emigrated, as well as in Indiana. Howard was a lawyer, of pleasing address and handsome appearance. Either of these two men would make a creditable representative of the state of Indiana.

In the combined House and Senate at Indianapolis there were exactly seventy-five Democrats and seventy-five Whigs but the Democrats were known to be divided. There was already a rumor in circulation to the effect that the flamboyant ex-Congressman Edward Allen Hannegan planned to upset Tilghman Howard's hopes if he could. The Democrat-owned *INDIANAPOLIS SENTINEL* said "It is but justice to state that the

story originated with the Whigs. Union and harmony are necessary at this point. We set [Hannegan] down at the outset as an enemy who would now unite with the Whigs in defeating the man upon whom, above all others, the hopes of the Democrats of Indiana rest." (That, to the SENTINEL, was Howard.)

The editor of the SENTINEL was mistaken if he thought that Ned Hannegan proposed to unite with the Whigs only to *defeat* Tilghman Howard. That wasn't Ned's idea at all: *he* proposed to unite with the Whigs—or rather with *a* Whig—to get *himself* elected senator. As to Hannegan's character in general the editor was entirely right; he *was* an enemy—of anyone who blocked his way.

On January 24th, 1843, the two Indiana legislative branches met in joint session. There were the usual time-consuming preliminaries, but finally the roll was called. Tilghman A. Howard received seventy-four of the seventy-five Democratic votes, Joseph G. Marshall, an able judge, got one: Oliver H. Smith had seventy-two of what should normally have been seventy-five Whig votes and Edward Allen Hannegan, rebellious Democrat, had three votes and one of these was the vote of Daniel Kelso, of Vevay, Switzerland County, hitherto a pillar of Whigdom. No nominee thus far had enough votes to be elected.

After further procrastination a second ballot was cast. On it Smith had the seventy-five he had every right to expect as his due (though one of them was assuredly of Democratic origin), Howard had seventy-four and Hannegan had one—that of Daniel Kelso, Vevay Whig.

On the third, fourth, and fifth roll-calls, Ned Hannegan received always Daniel Kelso's vote and sometimes two or three others.

After the fifth ballot the Indiana legislators adjourned for lunch—or rather dinner, since in those days Hoosiers, even when they were serving on official business in the Indiana metropolis, expected and received solid sustenance at noon. During the noon-hour, the powers of the Democratic party (we need not refer to them as "Howard's friends," as did a

current newspaper reporter) withdrew his name in the interests of "party harmony." Howard himself was not consulted; he was not even in Indianapolis. He had wisely chosen to sit out the ordeal at home in Rockville, Indiana.

When the body reconvened and another vote was taken there were four scattered votes, sixty-nine for Oliver H. Smith and, for Ned Hannegan, a seat in the United States Senate. One or two other Whigs of opportunist leanings had leaped on the Hannegan bandwagon at the last minute but it was conservative, sober, Daniel Kelso, who, by voting for him consistently, had prevented the election of either Smith or Howard and had elected Edward Allen Hannegan.

Why?

Well the "Why" is a fantastic story if we believe Edward Allen Hannegan's version of it, but one believable in Indiana, where politics have always been the hobby of three-quarters of the population.

According to Hannegan's tale he received the vote of Whig Kelso for this reason: Hannegan said that some years before, when he had found it necessary to ride the southern as well as the central Indiana circuits in search of practice, he had been called to Vevay, the once gay but already decaying seat of Switzerland County which Kelso represented at Indianapolis:

At the Vevay court he was asked to defend a man held on a charge of murder. He was successful in the defense but the defendant (who seems to have been a typical Hannegan client) had no money with which to pay attorney's fees. Hannegan—to whom money never meant much except when he was entirely without it—followed his usual procedure. He told the man that the charge would be written off his books if the client would, in the future, swear to uphold the Hannegan interest—especially the *political* interest—whenever the possibility presented itself. Strangely enough the client took this oath seriously and, when shortly afterwards he died, he bound his son to the same obligation.

At the time Daniel Kelso decided that the welfare of the state of Indiana demanded his presence in the State Legislature,

this son was dying of tuberculosis. He was bedridden but when Kelso called to solicit his vote he promised he would give it—if Kelso, when elected, would assume the family obligation to Lawyer Hannegan.

The election was going to be awfully close; the state of Indiana needed Daniel Kelso's firm hand in Indianapolis and how on earth could a Whig Representative ever be called upon to support Ned Hannegan? That per diem allowance was attractive and Kelso promised. The dying youth left his bed and voted and Kelso was elected—by one vote only, Hannegan always said. When the time came Kelso also took *his* obligation seriously. He too upheld the Hannegan interest and, well-nigh single-handed, elected Hannegan to the United States Senate.¹⁵ Our country probably never had a more disreputable senator, though many have tried hard since to break his record!

We are happy to note that Representative Isham Fuller did his best, in the interests of political decency, to stave off Hannegan's election: he voted for Tilghman A. Howard on the first five ballots. Only on the sixth, after Howard's name had been withdrawn and there was no other choice for a loyal Democrat, could he bring himself to vote for the ultimate winner.¹⁶

The senatorial election over, the Indiana State Legislature resumed normal business.

Fuller's vote on a bill introduced near the end of the session gives us our first indication of his attitude on a question of national importance. It shows his independence of thought and his ability to ignore party policy when he believed it wrong.

The measure, introduced on February 10th, had to do with the scandalously inept operations of the Indiana State Bank. (The Indiana bank was no worse than the others, understand—it was only one of many.) According to the SENTINEL, "Mr. Bradley moved to . . . take from the files of the House, the bill to enable the Bank to continue specie payments, &c.

15. Banta, R. E., ms. *Rake's Progress: The Life of Edward Allen Hannegan*.

16. *Journal of the Senate . . . Twenty-eighth Session. Indianapolis, 1843.*

"Mr. Bradley said there was no money in the treasury, and unless this bill is passed, the wheels of government must stop, we must go home without our pay, and our public officers will have to go without their salaries, &c.

"Mr. Bradley's motion prevailed."

There was considerable discussion and the usual efforts were made to divert the attention of the legislators, but eventually Mr. Bradley's motion came to a vote. When it did, Representative Fuller was among the "nays"—an interesting manifestation, since Jacksonian Democrats, by party policy, were supposed to distrust the whole banking system and to impede its operation at every opportunity. Fuller seems to have felt that just obligations should be met, regardless of party policy or his own pay.

Thus ended Isham Fuller's first session as a Representative in the Indiana State Legislature. His votes on measures other than those he himself introduced are shown by the JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES to have been consistently sound and frequently to have transcended party lines. He appeared as voting in favor of measures designed to further education (there were no free schools in Indiana until well after the adoption of the "new" constitution in 1851), to improve transportation facilities, and any others that appeared to be in the interest of progress and the public good in general. A sampling of the more flagrant-appearing "pork-barrel" measures shows him as voting consistently "nay"—even when these were of a nature bound to be dear to the hearts of other Democratic leaders. Already he had come to be known as *one* Indiana legislator who would not pay for support—a distinction a century ago, if not today.

The Indiana State Legislature convened for the session of 1843-44 on Monday, December 4th, with Representative Fuller answering roll call.

Ten days later two measures of national and party interest came before the House. One of these bills provided that Indiana join with other states in remitting to General Andrew Jackson the amount of the five thousand dollar fine levied against him

personally by the Creole government of New Orleans as a result of the charge of illegal seizure of city governmental functions during the defense of the place in the War of 1812. The measure passed the House, Fuller voting for it: while this would be expected of any man who presumed to call himself a Democrat, that fine levied against Jackson had certainly been unjust. It was an early example of the over-bearing attitude of the slave states that already pointed toward the debacle of 1861. Andy Jackson committed several crimes that merited punishment: this was not one of them. The second measure referred to opposed the annexation of Texas. Annexation was, of course, favored by the largely-Democratic slave states but it also had support from other, more reasoning, sources. Fuller's vote in favor of Texas annexation may well have been dictated by considered judgment rather than party policy: many intelligent men of better education voted the same way.

It was in this, his second session at Indianapolis, that Representative Fuller received his first two important committee assignments—to the Committee on Elections and to that on Military Affairs, the latter being a more intelligent choice than common: Fuller probably knew more of "Military Affairs" than any other member of the state administration.

He continued to serve on that latter committee throughout his terms of office, and he took a leading part in promulgating military legislation. Indeed he can be said, through measures he originated or supported, to have been responsible for an almost complete reorganization of the Indiana Militia during the five years that followed: his reforms in militia operations prevailed until after he was dead—and up to the very hour when efficient militia organization was most badly needed.

On December 9th Fuller introduced a reform measure of a most sensible nature: he proposed that the office of county auditor be abolished and that the duties of that office be combined with those of the county treasurer. Of course his proposal ultimately failed: such measures are still doomed to succumb to the county courthouse lobbies in Indiana, as in other states. During the following week he petitioned "for the reduction

of the charges of physicians." The exact intent of this move is not clear but the petition was referred to a select committee composed of himself and two others: probably it had to do with pauper care, since *no* government, then, had taken upon itself the duties of price-fixing.

There was a state-wide election in 1843 and Indiana voters chose a well-qualified Democrat for governor. He was to begin service in January, 1844.

James Whitcomb, mentioned before as eighth Governor of Indiana, combined the characteristics of background which separately marked most prominent men in the early days of the state: born in Vermont he had come west to college and had studied at Transylvania University located in the heart of the "Bluegrass" at Lexington, Kentucky—the institution that also nurtured Ned Hannegan, Jefferson Davis, and a good many others who made marks for themselves of one kind or another. Whitcomb read law and had been admitted to the Kentucky bar before coming to Indiana to settle. Thus James Whitcomb had the sympathy of both the New Englanders who predominated in the central and northern part of the state and the Southerners who lived below the National Road.

Whitcomb was an able man. Under his administration the state of Indiana worked out a plan to meet its obligations honorably. He worked hard for a system of free schools and state-operated benevolent institutions. When, in 1849, he was seated in the United States Senate, he left a good record as state executive behind him. It is unfortunate that he is chiefly remembered among Hoosiers because an admirer named Riley chose one of his sons to be a namesake of the Governor, and that son in time became a minor poet who colored the whole nation's concept of Hoosiers as a class.

While Governor Whitcomb left a good record when he resigned in the middle of his second term as Governor, he did not leave a particularly good successor.

Paris C. Dunning was presumably qualified for public life by current standards. A North Carolinian, he had attended a local academy before his family moved to Bloomington,

Indiana. Thereafter the reasons for his progress to political preferment are rather painfully obvious. Dunning read law in the office of Whitcomb. Whitcomb liked the boy and when he was nominated for the Governorship some influence (could it have been Whitcomb's?) carried Dunning along as Lieutenant-Governor. He was elected. What difference did it make in 1843? Whitcomb was comparatively young and quite healthy. What difference who the Lieutenant-Governor was?

Dunning wasn't the weakest governor Indiana had, at that: he has had many competitors since.

Ineffectual as he was, Paris C. Dunning was only bad for his day. Fortunately, after he had served out Governor Whitcomb's term, there was no popular demand for his continuation in office. He returned to his law practice and, except for a term as Indiana State Senator during the Civil War, stayed out of Indiana public life thereafter. Perhaps, actually, the man was wiser than he seemed.

But Governor Dunning's shortcomings are ahead of our story. For us—and Isham Fuller—it is still the winter of 1843-44, January now, and Representative Fuller is in his seat in the House—though with a man of his own party now in the governor's chair.

Representative Fuller was beginning to feel himself at ease and ready to show a business-like impatience with legislative boon-doggling. On January 6th, after a measure designed to revise the system of collecting fees authorized to county clerks had been amended and reamended out of all recognition, he moved successfully to table the whole matter. (Some such system of revision is still in order in Indiana, and possibly other states.)

Fuller served as delegate to the Democratic state convention which opened January 11th, 1844. The convention chose electors and endorsed party principles—but made no commitments as to candidates and stuck as closely as possible to safe generalities in discussing policies. Obviously the Indiana Democrats were preparing to make the most of their bargaining power on the national scene. The principles, as published, were:

“DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES

“A simple and frugal Government, confined within strict Constitutional limits.

“A strict construction of the Constitution, and no assumption of doubtful powers.

“No National Bank to swindle the laboring population.

“No connection between the government and banks.

“A Diplomacy, asking for nothing but what is clearly right and submitting to nothing wrong.

“No public deal, either by the General Government, or by the States, except for objects of urgent necessity.

“No assumption by the General Government of the debts of the States, either directly or indirectly, by a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands.

“A revenue tariff, discriminating in favor of the poor consumer instead of the rich capitalist.

“No extensive system of Internal Improvement by the General Government, or by the States.

“A constitutional barrier against improvident State Banks.

“The honest payment of our debts, and the sacred preservation of the public faith.

“A gradual return from a paper credit system.

“No grants of exclusive charters and privileges, by special legislation, to banks.

“No connection between Church and State.

“No proscription for honest opinions.

“Fostering aid to public education.

“A ‘progressive’ reformation of all abuses.”

—all of which had a wonderful sound but actually meant nothing whatever.

We know little of what he may have thought of these specious statements but Representative Fuller announced himself to be again a candidate in the election held in August, 1845—was nominated and won election by a majority said to have been largest, by percentage of voters, ever achieved in

Warrick county, where party loyalty was and is taken seriously.

He took his seat for the 1845-46 session on December 4th and resumed his duties on the Committee on Military Affairs. He was now its chairman. Within a year, when the country was at war with Mexico, this would become the most important committee of the House. In the House he was also regularly appointed to special committees, notably some relating to improved efficiency in governmental methods in which field he had shown a laudable, if ineffectual, interest during his first term. He also began to introduce some necessary routine measures that usually fall to the lot of old hands on the floor. Such assignments were an indication of his acceptance by his fellow legislators.

On January 8th, 1846, Representative Fuller introduced a bill of great importance, one that evidently resulted from experience and his own personal and deliberate thought and was the beginning of his greatest single contribution to the welfare of his state and nation. It was, says the SENTINEL, "a bill to provide for the organization of the militia." It "passed to a second reading" but was then unhappily relegated to that limbo to which state legislatures tend to consign important measures. It had to await reintroduction in the session of 1846-47, as we shall see in due time.

Isham Fuller had been a delegate to the Democratic state convention that January. The party had nominated James Whitcomb for its gubernatorial candidate. Whitcomb had been re-elected but, chosen by the Indiana State Legislature as a United States Senator in 1848, had, as we have noted, left Paris C. Dunning as successor. We shall cut back to 1847, before Whitcomb's departure, to see what Representative Fuller was about:

By early summer the United States was entirely committed to one of the shameful chapters in her history, the waging of the Mexican War, and the Indiana Militia had established training camp at Indianapolis. Representative Fuller's Committee on Military Affairs undoubtedly had its hands full: the war was being waged as inefficiently as is imaginable and the brunt of

Washington errors undoubtedly fell upon those responsible for the units of the militia of the various states which made up the bulk of the "working" combat force.

But the heavy responsibilities of paper-work and financing to which he undoubtedly fell heir were not enough for forty-eight year old Chairman Fuller. He also wished to fight. He had been too young for the War of 1812; he would almost certainly be too old for any future war. This was his chance; he loved military life and he wanted active duty—in any capacity. A paragraph in the Washington, D. C., UNION states:

"FROM INDIANA—THE RIGHT SPIRIT.—We learn that Brigadier General Isham Fuller, residing at Boonville, in the first congressional district of Indiana. . . and commanding the 12th Brigade, 1st division Indiana Militia, has reported himself at the Adjutant General's office: and 'desires that his services be tendered to the President, as a volunteer in the Mexican war, to go at the head of his brigade, or as a Colonel, or as a Captain, *or as a private soldier*; in whichever capacity it may be thought he can render the most efficient service to his country.' This is the spirit of true patriotism. . . ."

The Mexican War was one of politics to an extent unknown to United States history before or since and politics may have been the reason that General Fuller's trained brigade of the Indiana Militia was not immediately ordered to duty at a time when companies of raw recruits were being accepted. While this must have been a severe disappointment to Fuller he made good his promise to serve in any capacity even to the extent of assisting in the organization of a company. Under the heading "THE WARRICK BOYS FOREVER!! War Meeting at Boonville, Warrick County" the INDIANA STATE SENTINEL for June 20, 1846, reported that "In pursuance of the orders of Col. S. F. Bethel, the 34th Regiment of the Indiana Militia, assembled at Boonville—for the purpose of organizing a volunteer company of infantry, and tendering their services to the Governor in accordance with the requisition of the President of the United States. . ." While General Fuller would undoubtedly have preferred that it had been his own brigade that was called,

he was still present and introduced the principal speaker.

Isham Fuller was re-elected to the Legislature that fall and on December 10th again took his seat at Indianapolis. There was really little question about his election: his neighbors thought of him then, and remembered him later, as a statesman of the stature his former neighbor, Abraham Lincoln, eventually achieved. They said so at the polls.

He continued as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs and presumably the work of this body, with the country in a state of war, occupied most of his time. He introduced only routine measures in the Indiana House until, on January 5th, he presented the legislative program on which he had been concentrating his attention.

The first bill was designed to facilitate financing of the state's war effort. He also again presented "A bill . . . from the Committee on Military Affairs, to reorganize the militia of the State of Indiana." This time the bill was passed to the second reading and, on January 9th, was made the special order of the day. Fuller and his committee had wisely specified an enlistment period of one year, had recommended an age limit of 18 to 45, had specified a fine of 75c for enlisted men absent from drill and had avoided any mention of exemption from bearing arms because of conscientious scruples. Efforts were made to change or amend every provision but on the floor Fuller made an able defense of the bill as presented and it was ordered engrossed in its original form. Eventually this reorganization bill passed both Houses of the Legislature and became, in principal, the militia law under which Indiana has operated ever since.

While it is a matter of minor importance, residents of the Hoosier capitol should note that it was Isham Fuller, later in the same day's session, who first "reported a bill to incorporate the town of Indianapolis," thus opening to the capital metropolis a felicity it had not before enjoyed.

Fuller was absent during much of the early part of the legislative session of 1848-49 (which was the last for which he chose to run) and the reason may very well have been the increasingly poor health of his wife, Amelia, who died in the

latter year. He was back in his seat before the middle of January but he presented only a couple of measures of local interest in addition to those which involved military affairs: obviously he was troubled by Amelia's condition.

All votes cast by Isham Fuller throughout his years in the Legislature are of record but is not necessary to tabulate them here. He did not always follow the party line and he could usually be depended upon to support liberal (in the *correct* meaning of that term) and progressive measures even when he knew them to be probably unpopular with his own constituents. One of the most interesting occasions of this kind occurred in the 1846-47 session.

A bill had been presented which greatly liberalized Indiana's laws relating to the acceptance of the testimony of free Negroes in courts of law, which gave them the right to transfer property and to sue for redress. This was introduced at a time when the "Jim Crow" laws of both neighboring Illinois and Ohio were being rendered more stringent but Isham Fuller, a North Carolinian by birth and the Democratic representative of a county in which two out of three voters were of southern background and pro-slavery in sentiment, voted for the liberal measure—a most significant indication of his independence.

* * *

As has been said, Amelia Hudson McMurtry Fuller died in the year 1849. Her children by her first marriage—reared in Isham's home—were grown men and women. The couple's own son, Benoni Stinson Fuller, twenty-four years old at the time of his mother's death, had then been teaching in local schools for three years. The Fullers' eldest daughter, Rachel, had married in 1841, and the other two girls were either married or planning shortly to enter that state. By the time Amelia died, she and Isham had their family "reared."

No matter what the extent of his love for a deceased wife may have been, in the Eighteen-forties a man did not long maintain a widower's farm home, especially when he was as prominent as Isham Fuller. After an interval of a few years

Isham married again: his bride was another widow, Mrs. Agnes Wilson Fitzgerald. He was then a man in his early fifties; while Agnes, born in Ireland in the year 1821 and an emigrant to the United States, was little more than thirty. Soon the couple added a second crop of Fuller children to replace those now grown. There were Hannah Mariah, Thomas, and the last, a son named William Wilson, who was not born until July 29, 1857. Less than a year after that, on February 14th, 1858, Isham himself passed away.

When his estate was settled there was some favorable balance but it was little enough to make a home for Agnes and to see three younger children through some elementary schooling—nothing would be left to finance such a luxury as higher education for any of them. They must attend to that themselves.

Regardless of that, Isham Fuller had still left a heritage to his children which would serve them well; a heritage of sound blood, a spotless name, and a faith in the virtue of good and honest government. He—farmer, mechanic, school teacher when necessary, chosen arbiter of disputes, local authority on history and religion, leader in military affairs and capable legislator—had been chief citizen of his neighborhood by his neighbors' choice. No man need look for higher honor.

III

BENONI Stinson Fuller, born November 13th, 1825 at the family farm north of Boonville, was eldest son of Isham and Amelia Hudson McMurtry Fuller and their second child. At the time of his birth his father was twenty-seven years old and his mother (a widow at the time of their marriage) was seven years older. The couple named their son for Benoni Stinson, a prominent preacher of the Baptist sect in the Midwest.

When Benoni Fuller died in 1903, his long-time friend Judge Edward Gough of the Warrick circuit court pronounced a eulogy, later published in *THE BOONVILLE ENQUIRER*. It was a piece of highly literate writing and it gives a nice sketch of the man and his background:

"The year 1825 seems to be very far away from us. Only seven years before that time Chester Elliott was running lines through the woods for his survey of our town. Five years after that time, in 1830, there were but eighty-seven souls in the few rude cabins, of which Boonville then consisted; Indiana was then a State nine years old. John Quincy Adams had just succeeded James Monroe as President of the United States; Napoleon Bonaparte had died four years before in his prison on St. Helena. The span of this life that closed day before yesterday links us to that far away time.

"Benoni S. Fuller was born November 13, 1825 about seven miles north of Boonville. For seventy-seven years he has been a citizen of this county. He was a son of Isham Fuller who came to Indiana from North Carolina in 1816. Years before rich

blood and splendid stock had been transplanted to North Carolina from England and Scotland and Ireland. This blood in the veins of hardy young men scaled the Blue Ridge to the tributaries of the Tennessee. Here were constructed the flat boats in which they, with their little belongings, made the long journey to the Ohio.¹ They found homes in the new State of Indiana and the Territory of Illinois. Among the settlers was Isham Fuller as well as the girl who afterwards became his wife and the mother of Benoni. . . .

"Sixty-five years ago the common school system of Indiana, as we know it, had only been dreamed of by her most enlightened citizens. Boys like Benoni S. Fuller who desired an education were dependent chiefly on their own efforts, yet he made such good use of his meager opportunities that he was a school teacher before he had reached the twenty-first year. At thirty years he was the sheriff of the county and continued in that office four years. In 1862 he was State Senator. Beginning in 1866 he served four years in the state House of Representatives. In 1872 he was again State Senator. From 1874 to 1878 he represented the first Congressional district of Indiana in the national House of Representatives.

"It will thus be seen that Mr. Fuller devoted almost a quarter of a century of the best part of his life to the service of the people. That this service was satisfactory to his fellow citizens is evidenced by the many endorsements they gave him at the polls. He was a conscientious, capable and honorable public servant in every position to which he was called. He was a patient listener to the wrongs of his constituents and earnestly addressed himself to their correction. He treated every man's views with consideration and respect. Mr. Fuller will be gratefully remembered as the friend of struggling and aspiring young men. Worth and ability in rags and tatters as it often is, he greeted

1. Although this defined route may have been only an oratorical period supplied by the Judge, many emigrants bound for Indiana did follow it. We have assumed that Isham took the shorter overland way because he had no goods to transport and because his brother, Gideon, had used it before him.

with helping hand and encouraging counsel. There are many men in the community, now approaching middle age, who were the recipients of his valuable favors. Though he died poor in earthly possessions he was rich in the regard and confidence of his fellow man. God is to be thanked that even in this commercial age there are things that mere riches will not buy.

"His sturdy and familiar figure will be missed in the community. His kindly greeting, his fund of anecdote, his store of recollections of men of national reputation and his general good natures will long be remembered.

"Failings and faults? Yes, doubtless he had them. It is not likely that he always reached his own ideal. It may be said with certainty that he failed to attain the ideal of some of his neighbors. 'Let him that is without fault cast the first stone.' Let him only who is never dissatisfied with himself now make murmur and complaint.

"The long pilgrimage is over; the full rounded life is ended. The greater part of the seventy-seven years are history to so many and memory to so few. . . There is no doubt but when his deeds are placed in the balance the scale holding his shortcomings will rise towards the sky. Can any man hope for more? To the five. . . children and the many sorrowing relatives the community extends its heartfelt sympathy and bids them to remember: 'God's will be done.' "2

Benoni Fuller would have appreciated that frank, friendly, tribute. Any man should be happy to have merited and received it.

A further glimpse at Benoni S. Fuller's personality in his prime is supplied by his niece, Mrs. Gertrude Moore, charming San Antonio lady now in her eighties who recalls him as an admired visitor in her girlhood home. "Perhaps it was because I loved them so much, but I think they, Benoni and his brothers William Wilson and Thomas, must have been the three most popular young men in our little town. They were the sort of tall, well-built, sweet, kind, friendly folks that endeared them-

2. THE BOONVILLE ENQUIRER, Vol. LII, No. 17, Apr. 24, 1903.

selves to everybody; I'm sure they were loved by all who knew them."

Mrs. Moore, the one living person familiar with intimate details of his life that did not get into print, explains that Benoni Fuller was married three times—and that each marriage ended in tragedy.

First of his wives was handsome, dashing, Martha Hart, killed by a fall from a horse when she and Benoni had been married less than a year.

By his second wife, the former Martha A. Denny, Benoni had a daughter, Mary L., but Martha died when this child was quite young.

As we shall see later, through casual references to their relationship which found their way into print, Benoni himself took successful charge of the little girl's rearing instead of turning the unfamiliar problems involved over to some aunt or female cousin, as most men of his time would have found convenient.

By his third wife, Mary Emma Lynes (whom he married in 1876, who was more than twenty years his junior and, as we shall discover in time, had a mind of her own) he had four children: Ewing, Daniel Voorhees, Robin, and Rhetta. The naming of the second son mentioned presents good evidence of Benoni Fuller's party loyalty. In those days many a Hoosier named a promising boy-baby for silver-tongued Daniel Voorhees, "The Tall Sycamore of the Wabash" and the idol of all good Midwestern Democrats.

But his children are ahead of our story. Taking it in proper sequence we find Benoni Stinson Fuller still only a Warrick County school teacher, albeit a popular and a foresighted one who had already begun to buy himself a farm, as did every ambitious young man in the West, as soon as he had saved the few dollars necessary to make the down payment.

It was probably in the spring of 1856 that an opportunity presented itself by which he could continue in the public service he had already come to enjoy and, at the same time, enjoy an increase in financial return that would beat school teaching

and hasten unencumbered ownership of that farm. His friends suggested and he agreed that he might well run for the office of sheriff of Warrick County—a position considerably more important in pioneer Indiana than it is in the Twentieth Century—and he was duly nominated and easily elected.

Once in office, and operating under the “new” Indiana Constitution of 1851, he found that the sheriff of Warrick County faced some peculiar problems common to only a small percentage of those of the state, and by sheriffs, elsewhere, only in a few counties in Ohio, a few in Pennsylvania, and still fewer in Illinois. Sheriffs in these border areas had to decide on the proper attitude to assume toward slaves fleeing north to free Canada from the slave states. It was no minor problem—especially for a young sheriff just elected to office on the Democratic ticket!

The Indiana Constitution of 1851, in spite of the guidance of the rather muddle-headed but profoundly altruistic Robert Dale Owen, had come up with some provisions less pleasant than those that were supposed to institute state-wide free education (but didn’t until they were revised and rendered workable by more practical minds) and others of the same high purpose.

Following the temporizing sentiment of the original Missouri Compromise, the new constitution provided unbenevolent measures designed to govern the admission of Negroes to the state—which, presumably, Owen and his liberal friends condoned if not endorsed:

“Section 1. No Negro or Mulatto shall come into or settle in the State, after the adoption of the Constitution.

“Section 2. All contracts made with any Negro or Mulatto . . . contrary to the provisions of the foregoing section, shall be void; and any person who shall employ such a Negro or Mulatto, or otherwise encourage him to remain in the State, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars.”

The voters of Indiana ratified this article of the Constitution

by a vote of nearly five to one, according to the record.³

Warrick County, knowledgeable and complacent as to the evils of Negro slavery as it was, still found itself in the center of one of the easiest routes by which intelligent slaves from the border states (in which were bred most of the *intelligent* slaves, Harriet Beecher Stowe's information notwithstanding)⁴ could most easily find access to a path that would lead them to Canada and freedom.

Now Warrick County and its seat, Boonville, had been mainly settled by Southerners, as we have seen, and so had most other southern Indiana counties. Nevertheless there were, all through this southern belt, little nests of citizens—Quakers, Episcopalians, or even simply unreligious men of conscience—who, from the very beginning of the day when slaves undertook to run away to freedom, had been willing to give them a helping hand. Some of these people were loosely organized into what came to be called "The Underground Railroad"; others, with no particular feeling about slavery at all, still could not bear to refuse assistance to a man or woman in trouble, no matter what his or her color happened to be. (We may well suspect that Sheriff Benoni Stinson Fuller began as a member of this latter humanitarian class.)

As it happened, one of those little pockets of sentiment which first sponsored the Underground Railroad existed in and around the site of present Oakland City located in the southeast corner of Gibson County where it adjoined Warrick. The interests of these dedicated abolitionists (a class that included many individuals who could be fully as unscrupulous as the slave-holders whose activities they decried) extended in two directions—south into slave territory, from whence the fugitives came, and north to Canada, their ultimate destination.

In opposition, there were at least a dozen men in and around Boonville who made a profitable part-time employment of

3. Thornbrough, Gayle & Riker, Dorothy—*Readings in Indiana History*.

4. Furnas, J. C.—*Goodbye to Uncle Tom*, has an excellent analysis of where the runaway slave came from and why—not to mention a devastating survey of what Mrs. Stowe did *not* know when she wrote her great book.

chasing runaway slaves in the hope of collecting the rewards offered. Not a few of these were reputed to be not above kidnapping and selling free Negroes when the opportunity offered. In spite of this element in Warrick County there were, also, a number of men actively engaged in the work of the Underground Railroad: Ira Caswell, a large, hearty, farmer living about four miles north of Boonville maintained one of the largest "stations" in Indiana, and made no bones about the fact.

It also came to be that Kentucky slave-hunters who crossed Warrick following the principal route of runaways—from the mouth of Little Pigeon Creek, through Boonville to Ira Caswell's farm and on north—found themselves not only without assistance from the new sheriff of Warrick but sometimes actually delayed and impeded by his actions.⁵ Although contemporary accounts do not mention him by name, the young officer who showed such complacency and negligence in respect to the newly-passed compromise designed to soothe and appease the South and called "The Fugitive Slave Law" must certainly have been young Sheriff Fuller. He was one of those who could not bear to refuse aid to the fugitives: an Indiana newspaper states that, told in horror by pro-Southern constituents, "slaves were escaping from their Kentucky owners through territory under his jurisdiction," young Fuller said, simply but conclusively, "Let 'em!"

Neglect of the duties of slave-catching could cost an officer of the law a good stiff fine as well as loss of the votes of the pro-slavery element. The sheriff was taking quite a chance but his liberal sentiments did not damage his popularity at all! The newspaper story previously quoted on the subject of fugitive slaves continues, "Contrary to the party's principles and the vote of Warrick County against Lincoln and for the Southern cause, he refused to become an official bloodhound. When the war was over his popularity carried him to Congress."⁶ The

5. Cockrum, Col. William M.—*History of the Underground Railroad* Oakland City, Ind.

6. Feature story in the INDIANAPOLIS STAR, May 28, 1939.

story does not so state but before that it had carried him to the Indiana State Legislature at the most critical period of the Confederate revolt.

Mrs. Moore's reminiscence continues:

"About the time of his third marriage he was elected to Congress and they [Benoni and Mary Emma] went to Washington, where he stayed sixteen or eighteen years, the family—there were four lovely children—being with him most of the time. He was in Congress when that body meant something to the people.⁷

"He was an outstanding figure; tall, broad-shouldered; sideburns—and with his Prince Albert coat, high silk hat and cane. What a figure he made as he walked around the square, stopping to shake hands with his fellow farmers! He looked like a Kentucky Colonel *ought* to look—and he had the sweetest, softest accent, probably a mixture of Indiana drawl and Washington persuasion, but everybody loved it!

"They were a fine looking family—he, Aunt Em with her Washington gowns and the boys dressed in the height of fashion, even to their curls. They moved to town—Boonville—after they returned from Washington, and they lived in a big white house.

"Uncle Benoni and Aunt Emma seemed the very personification of the ideal couple; it seemed they had everything. Then the blow fell. Aunt Em left Uncle Ben, received a divorce and married Gurley Taylor, a farmer who raised fine horses. I do not know what the trouble could have been: I was too young to have heard gossip, if there had been any, and Grandmother never talked about the matter."

(Fortunately *we* do know what the trouble was, from other sources, and we will be able to describe it in its proper place.)

"It utterly ruined dear Uncle Ben: he never got over it.

7. Mrs. Moore is wrong about the "sixteen or eighteen years." Fuller did spend some time in Washington after his term of office as a representative of persons who were interested in special legislation, but those visits could have covered no more than a few months. He was only in Congress a total of four years, after which he refused reelection.

He had been a prominent man, had lived for years in public life, influential in a home town among many friends who loved and admired him. I do not know what became of the farm but I think he must have had bad debts: Grandmother used to say 'Benoni is just too good for his own good! He'll go on anybody's note who asks him.' I'm sure he lost a good deal of money that way.

"But loss of his wife and family was far worse than the loss of money. He was too old, and too hurt, to make a comeback. His last years were most tragic—no home, no family, and I am sure very little money . . . a fallen hero. Never was there a finer gentleman—good to a fault—nor one who was hurt more deeply."

Mrs. Moore's assumption as to Benoni's improverished situation is undoubtedly correct. At the time of his death he was, according to belief of his most intimate friends, almost entirely without financial resources.

Such are the bare facts of Benoni Stinson Fuller's life—distinguished in public and unhappy in private—as seen by his contemporaries.

Mrs. Moore, then a young girl likely to be impressed by the romantic aspects of such matters, probably knew more of her uncle's private sorrows than did anyone else who has spoken about them.

His public career was quite a different matter. He seems to have been one of the most generally popular office-holders Indiana ever had. In the State Legislature he became one of the leading proponents of practical reform measures, possessed of truly high ideals and far ahead of his day in the social improvements he envisioned. His service was fully as competent in the United States Congress as it was in the Indiana House and Senate. He was one Indiana politician who not only impressed his young niece with his "high silk hat and cane" but also made an impression on the future of United States as well.

It at first appears an odd thing that there is so little mention of Benoni Stinson Fuller in the preserved files of Indiana newspapers during his career in the Indiana State Legislature. While

the record of his father, Isham, is gleaned almost exclusively from newspaper stories, we must recall that, during Benoni's years in office, his party was mainly in eclipse: party newspapers had been left with little power, little circulation. For data on his career we must depend on a few scattered articles, on the official JOURNALS of the Indiana House and Senate, and later on the dull and neglected columns of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The career was colorful; immediately on his arrival he attracted attention on the Indiana Senate floor and he maintained a position as a party leader throughout his terms.

On the floor itself, as witnessed by the pages of the JOURNAL, he came to dominate parliamentary proceedings, with his recommendations accepted alike by his party and the opposition. This is true to a really singular extent, and it makes the absence of publicity regarding him in papers with statewide circulation all the more puzzling. It could be, of course, that Benoni Fuller was one of those individuals who is occasionally doomed to serve long and well without much recognition, but the contemporary descriptions of him—a big, handsome, friendly extrovert, perhaps even a bit on the flamboyant side—makes this seem unlikely. Whatever the reason, published data on Benoni Stinson Fuller is scarce indeed.

The book *Representative Men of Indiana*, already cited, gives great credit to his mother. (That is not altogether trustworthy, for it is a technique then and now often applied by compilers of such works.) "She . . . did much in shaping the destiny of young Benoni. His worth has been largely due to the training of that loving mind . . . as the son of pioneer parents Benoni Fuller had few advantages for securing an education; but he had energy and industry and soon mastered the rudiments. A few short months in the log-cabin college⁸ each winter were the sum total of his early advantages; but he did much reading outside." The biographical work referred to prefers to ignore the fact, but by the time Benoni was seventeen or so several "acad-

8. Of course it was not a "college" but only a grade school. The writer was apparently trying for a spritely note.

emies" had been founded well within walking distance of Boonville: we may be sure that he took advantage of some study in one or another of them—even though the editors may have omitted the fact because it seemed to impunge Benoni's status as a "self-made man!"

The editors' next statement is probably true, as it was typical of the experience of most sons of large pioneer families in the Indiana of the 'Forties, "When a boy did anything for a living—cut wood, mauled rails, burned brush, cleared land, and did all the other farm work incident to pioneer life. His father gave him his time before he became of age⁹ and he used it apparently to good advantage. He worked at home or abroad, by the day or month, and was careful to husband his means and prepare himself for the future. . . . Before he was twenty-one we find him in the school-room as teacher, which of itself speaks of the way in which he spent his time. . . . His public life began when he was about thirty years old. At this time he was elected sheriff of the county, and served two terms, from 1857 to 1861. In 1862, during the beginnings of the troubles with the South, he was deemed a fit man to be trusted, and was sent to the state Senate. . . ."

We may well wonder what a loyal young man of his age at the opening of the Civil War (Benoni S. Fuller, born in 1825, was thirty-six in 1861) was doing out of the army and in a position to run for a seat in the Indiana State Senate in 1862. It is not impossible that he actually may have served one of the current six-months enlistments in the Union forces before the political campaign began (although his name has not been found in the maze of unclassified lists of either Indiana or Kentucky volunteers) but anyway lack of military service was not necessarily a handicap in Fuller's immediate neighborhood. He was running for the Indiana Senate from a joint district of

9. That phrase "gave him his time" means that Isham let Benoni keep what he earned instead of taking it away from him, as was his legal right. A boy's earnings until he was twenty-one, by the pleasant custom of the day, were usually considered a contribution he made to his parents in return for the favor of being born.

three counties, the citizens of which were predominately of Southern origin and generally sympathetic to the South, though some of them could not bring themselves to aid slave-catchers in their inhuman business. Even so, most people in the district remained loyal to the Union through principle—Southern sympathy notwithstanding—and Warrick in particular furnished so many volunteers (994 to September 19, 1862)¹⁰ that it need draft only seven men to fill its quota to that date. It was indeed the only county north of the Mason-Dixon line that gave plurality to Breckinridge and Lane over its old neighbor, Abraham Lincoln, with Hamlin his running mate for the vice-presidency, in 1860 (Benoni Fuller himself presided at the county convention that endorsed the Democratic candidates)¹¹ but the county's vote was a tribute to *Lane* not to Breckinridge, and no serious reflection on Lincoln, who, after all, had only been a *neighbor*. "Lane" was none other than General Joseph Lane, citizen of Warrick, boy and man, friend of Benoni's and not only a friend of Isham's but also a strong supporter of his Indiana militia system!

Of course Warrick County supported that Democratic ticket. What under-populated, hitherto undistinguished, county could refrain, with one of its own sons in the second spot in the billing?

Benoni Fuller's status as a young man in time of war is a puzzle: there is no evidence that he served in the armed forces; he might even, conceivably, have based an appeal for votes in his district on an anti-war sentiment, but once elected to the Indiana Senate he voted as a "Union Democrat"—which was a very different thing from a "Copperhead." In the matter of slaves running away through Indiana he had stuck to his decision to "Let 'em" and at the capitol he took positively aggressive measures in the interest of Union soldiers, Union veterans, their families, and their general welfare.

Benoni Stinson Fuller seems indeed to have been that 1861-

10. Goodspeed's *History of Warrick, Spencer and Perry Counties*, 1885.

11. THE WARRICK DEMOCRAT, Dec. 6, 1859.

65 *rara avis* in Indiana, a *real* "Union Democrat," with no axe to grind, no ulterior motive to prompt him.

At the time word of the fall of Fort Sumter reached Indianapolis the state of Indiana was in as bad a spot as she had ever been since admission to the Union. "She had no money, no arms or munitions, no organized militia." That state militia organization Isham Fuller had so long nurtured and cherished, had finally been allowed to die, as far as any practical virtue in it was concerned. Competent and aggressive Governor Oliver P. Morton had only recently taken office and had not yet been able to make needed reforms. The state was full of "Copperheads."

In spite of this total lack of resources, Governor Morton wired President Lincoln the next day—April 15, 1861—offering ten thousand men. The next day after that the Governor issued a proclamation calling upon his constituents to find these ten thousand, with equipment to outfit and money to pay them. Young game-cock Lew Wallace, Crawfordsville veteran of the Mexican War and always eager to leave his law practice for more venturesome diversion, was appointed Adjutant General and the State Legislature was called into special session. It voted to borrow funds and appointed Robert Dale Owen to purchase arms. (At the time the state owned 725 fire arms of which 505 were beyond repair and 54 were flint locks! Owen bought 6000 modern rifles and 1000 carbines to begin with.)¹²

Within a remarkably short time, and no one knew just how, Indiana had fighting men on the Virginia (now West Virginia) line.

This writer believes that Benoni Fuller, during the period 1861-62, must actually have carried out some important, if secret, service to his country—unless perhaps, he was wise enough to see that by condoning slave migration from the border states through Southern Indiana he was promoting Union interest with more practical efficiency than were many men in uniform.

12. Terrell, W. H. H.—*Report of the Adjutant General of Indiana*.

Whatever the case, he announced himself a candidate for the office of Joint Senator from those southern Indiana Counties of Perry, Spencer, and Warrick early in the year 1862. He received the nomination, backed both by those who supported the South in theory and those who opposed its aims, and, in the Fall election, won the office. He must have known, when he announced his candidacy, that he had two strikes against him as far as the state at large was concerned: Indiana was a center of the most virulent "Copperheadism" and any Democrat lawmaker would be suspect from the day he took his seat.

He ran, he was elected, and—strangest of all—he seems to have met with immediate acceptance by his fellow Senators, Republican and Democrat alike.

The administration under which he made his debut had taken office under what would seem today to be unusual circumstances. Henry S. Lane, a former Indiana congressman, had always cherished an ambition to sit in the United States Senate. Lane had been a Whig but became one of the founders of the Republican Party and presided at its first national convention in 1856.

In 1859 the Indiana State Legislature elected him to the United States Senate, but the confused state of politics in Washington enabled his predecessor to contest the election. The Senate voted on the matter and decided against Lane. Next year, in 1860, the Indiana State Republican convention nominated Lane its candidate for governor. For Lieutenant-Governor it named Oliver P. Morton who had been its candidate for the governorship four years before but had been defeated.

The Republican candidates campaigned strenuously—recent railroad building had made coverage of the state an easier matter, Lane interrupting his canvass only to attend the Republican national convention at the newly built "Wigwam" in Chicago, where he worked effectively for Lincoln's nomination. Lane and Morton had strong Democratic opposition (Thomas A. Hendricks and David Turpie) but the Democratic Party was torn nationally by the beginnings of the Confederate revolt and the two Republicans were elected by a sizeable majority.

Henry S. Lane took the oath of office on January 14, 1861. He made a strong speech against the right of secession in his address to the Legislature and began to make his appointments but when, two days later, the House and Senate met in joint session to elect a United States Senator he permitted his name to be presented as a candidate. He was elected. He immediately resigned the governor's seat, turned it over to Oliver P. Morton, and departed for Washington. Henry S. Lane was an adequate although not an outstanding senator: Oliver P. Morton, handicapped at the outset by an unfriendly legislature, won its members over and became a strong war-time governor.

State Senator Fuller's earliest recognition in printed sources was prophetic: the JOURNAL lists him as Benoni L. Fuller, senator from the joint district of "Perry, Spencer and Warrick" counties. The Heavenly powers began their conspiracy to withhold recognition of his service by thus assigning to him the wrong initial; "L" instead of "S"!

Senator Fuller was not ignored by his fellows, however: he was assigned membership in the committees "On Corporations," "On Manufacturers," "On the State Library," and "On Expenditures." While none of these were of vital importance, their very multiplicity was a fair omen for a freshman senator. Besides there were less important committees in the Indiana State Senate—for instance, a committee on "The Town of Indianapolis," on "Phrasaeology of Bills," on "Unfinished Business," on "Swamp Lands," and on "Rights and Privileges of the Inhabitants."

This list proves beyond shadow of a doubt that Senator Fuller had not received assignments of the most innocuous order!

The first measure introduced by Benoni Fuller was one of considerable importance to state revenue (although it was probably claimed by the Republican opposition to be only a thrust at federal powers) and was passed on to a second reading: "Senate bill No. 19. 'An Act to provide that the value of United States Government stamp duties required and used on regular process, certificates, bonds . . . deeds of conveyance . . . shall, in

all actions, be taxed and collected as other costs in said action.' ”

His next bill is one of those that shows him carrying on the interest in military affairs so long shown by his father in the House, and proves beyond doubt the fact that Senator Fuller was interested in prosecuting the Civil War efficiently. *That was by no means true of all Democratic law-makers in Indiana, or indeed of all Republicans!* Benoni Fuller's "Senate bill No. 113, entitled 'an act to repeal an act for the defense of the State of Indiana, to procure first class arms, artillery, cavalry and infantry equipments and munitions of war, making the necessary appropriations there for, and authorizing the Governor to borrow money.' ” It was passed to a second reading. Its purpose was to clear the way for measures, later introduced, under which the State of Indiana might appropriate funds to pay troops in the Federal service, an obligation which the condition of the Federal treasury did not then permit it to meet regularly.

Midway through his first session Senator Fuller began to be selected to report the actions of the committees on which he served: that was indeed a singular recognition, since he was a "freshman" and since his party was in the minority on the committees anyway.

Fuller moved the amendment of House bill No. 42, an important measure designed to revise and simplify court proceedings in civil actions. There is no record of his having studied civil law—what knowledge he had picked up in his young manhood while serving as sheriff would normally relate mainly to the criminal—but throughout his career we find him sponsoring complicated measures relating to civil and corporate law, most of which were accepted by his associates as worthwhile. Apparently he had either acquired for himself a sound knowledge in these fields or he sought and acted upon the advice of competent lawyers.

At the end of the 1863 session another mystery is presented to plague us. In spite of his brilliant beginning, Benoni Stinson Fuller was either not a candidate or was not re-elected to the Indiana State Senate. Again the newspapers of the day fail us: there is no available record as to which was the explanation.

Not only have we no information as to why he gave up—temporarily—his political ambitions, but we do not know how he occupied his time during the next four years. He owned a good farm near Boonville on which he maintained his residence but he is never mentioned as a working farmer: apparently the place was always operated by tenants or hired hands. That was the usual procedure in his day: the business man, professional man, or politician, bought a farm with his savings and secured some one to run it for him on some sort of share arrangement. In the uncontrolled speculation of the United States, circa 1850-1900, that was the safest, soundest, investment a man could make.

Perhaps there was some sort of internal dissension among the Democrats of Warrick, Spencer, and Perry Counties in 1864; perhaps one of those unfortunate domestic crises that we have noted as dogging Benoni Fuller was at its worst. (That *could* have been the year that his second wife, Martha Denny Fuller, died after giving birth to her daughter Mary L. We do not have the exact date of either the birth or the death, but Mary's approximate age, as recorded later, would make it possible. Certainly such a tragedy—following the dramatic passing of his first bride—would dull a man's appetite for campaigning.) Whatever the reason, there is a two year hiatus in his public career. When it was resumed, in 1866, he was elected from Warrick County to the Indiana State House of Representatives.

Toward the close of Governor Oliver P. Morton's second term (following the rather dubious example of his predecessor Morton got himself elected by the Legislature to a seat in the United States Senate. In those days everyone, competent and incompetent alike, yearned to go to Washington. Ah! The innocence of our forefathers!) Conrad Baker, a Civil War colonel who had been appointed, not elected, Lieutenant Governor of Indiana, took Morton's place at Indianapolis. He served out Morton's term and, in the next election, won himself a full term in the office he already occupied. Baker, a Republican, had with him a legislature of his own party, many of

whom were fellow Union veterans, and proud of their records.

No discoverable source gives positive evidence as to why Fuller had not again been a candidate for the Indiana State Senate after his first term. His record was certainly good enough to warrant re-election if he had chosen to try. He did not, and all we can do is guess as to the possible reason. Instead, after a bit of rest, he made that campaign for his county's seat in the Indiana House of Representatives, was elected in 1866 by a reassuring majority and took his seat, serving under Governor Baker, in 1867.

Immediately he began to take a prominent part in parliamentary matters in the House—as why should he not, being an alumnus of the Senate?—and his leadership was readily accepted. Always he opposed waste of time, sometimes with success. Soon, also, he began to introduce the same sort of wise measures that had made his reputation as a senator: now those resolutions were even more to the public good, since the Civil War was over and men's minds could turn to matters other than emergency measures. Mr. Fuller:

"Resolved, That the Committee on Education inquire into the expediency of so amending the Common School Law so as to allow the German Language to be taught in Common School districts where the citizens desire it."

A few days later he introduced "House bill No. 16. A bill to amend sections 123 and 124 of an act entitled 'An act to provide for the valuation and assessment of real and personal property, and the collection of taxes . . . for the election of Township Assessors, and prescribing the duties of Assessors, appraisers of real property, County Treasurers and Auditors, and of the Treasurer and Auditor of State,' approved June 21, 1852." This bill was passed through the first reading, referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and eventually became the Indiana law.

No matter what resident Hoosiers may think of the present-day system of appraisal for tax purposes—by which superannuated ward-heelers with no other means of support, who never bought for themselves a square rod of real property, are en-

trusted with the evaluation of farms several square miles in area; who, never having owned floor-covering more elaborate than a piece of mail-order-house linoleum, are expected to appraise antique oriental rugs; who are unaware of the difference between the stock of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and that of The Wonder Gold, Oil, and Uranium Corporation of Saskatchewan—the modern system is still better than that by which taxes were assessed before Representative Fuller introduced his bill. Before that *no* one had paid *any* personal property taxes—to any significant extent.

Fuller's next effort, House bill No. 168, was another of those esoteric legal measures. This was designed to tighten the reins on the previously free-wheeling Indiana judiciary and to provide suitable warnings against the assumption of illegal authority by state courts. It was a wise and just measure and it, too, eventually became a beneficial law.

Within a few days there was another, equally important, resolution:

"That the Committee on Elections inquire into the expediency of passing a law requiring all the ballots to be used for voting at any election, shall be written or printed on plain white paper, and reported by bill or otherwise."

This resolution, designed to render more difficult the sort of deviltry that had always marked Indiana politics, was referred to the Committee on Elections where, apparently, it was pigeon-holed by those who found it offensive and inexpedient. Its failure was no fault of Representative Fuller.

Shortly after that, he tried to counteract an abusive practice, dear to the heart of political punks, by which certain Indiana sheriffs could earn more income than Indiana paid as salary to its Governor by fictitious or grossly exaggerated charges for mileage while on duty. Mr. Fuller knew all about sheriffs.

"Mr. Fuller, by consent, offered the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That there be a committee of one from each Congressional district appointed to inquire into the expediency of fixing by law the distance from the several counties in the State to the State Prison, whereby the mileage of Sheriffs conveying

convicts to said Prison may be determined."

The JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE adds to this phrase, "Which was agreed to" but that means only that the *referring* was "agreed to." The resolution failed. Indiana did not get around to correcting this mileage abuse until almost ninety years had passed.

A good deal of the time of the House, toward the end of the session, was required to clear the way for that reform of fiscal management, tax appraisal reform, and the general stabilization of financial policy that Representative Fuller had undertaken in House bill No. 161, referred to heretofore. As nearly as we can gather from the records of the legislature every Representative who had a father, a brother, an uncle, a cousin, or a nephew then drawing pay for the service of assessing property for taxes had tried to block Fuller's sensible and comprehensive taxing measure. (Mothers, wives, sisters, aunts, and nieces presented no problem in that day before women's suffrage; now there are female relatives of ward-heelers involved in the racket as well as male.) The opposition leaders were able to discover many laws on the books with which Fuller's bill would interfere besides those he had mentioned: they fought, long and bravely, for their relatives' sinecures.

Representative Fuller won part of his objectives eventually. It is not his fault that ways were soon found to provide well for the same relatives in the same or similar uncomplicated fields of endeavor.

Part II of that year's JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE found Representative Fuller fighting some of the same old battles, and some new ones, with the old fervor.

He again brought up the bill to force sheriffs to justify their mileage charges. This time it was passed to a second reading.

Shortly he moved "to suspend the order of business" to resume consideration of that bill designed to permit fiscal reform. His fellow-members, by now evidently afraid to do otherwise, agreed. The reform program had by now been broken up into several sections. Bill No. 275 (which regulated the activities of the state Auditor and Treasurer) was put to a vote: 77 for

and a lonely 6 against. No. 276 (the part which regulated Township Assessors and County Treasurers and Auditors) received 74 ayes and 8 nays. On these two Representative Fuller achieved a victory that came very near to amounting to a rout.

On January 7th, 1868, Benoni S. Fuller was back in Indianapolis for another term of the House of Representatives. His first action was to re-introduce his move to regulate the mileage claimed by sheriffs. This time it was presented in the form of House bill No. 23 and passed the first reading but was apparently stifled thereafter: Indiana legislators rightly feared the political power of county sheriffs in the 'Sixties—as they still do.

His next bill related to a subject which must have seemed a novel one to his fellows—and is another example of the very advanced thinking evidenced by the measures on schools, civil law, and efficiency in government he had already presented—it was on conservation of natural resources.

"House bill No. 82. A bill to amend section 2 of an act entitled 'An act to provide for the protection of wild game, and defining the time in which the same may be taken and killed, and declaring the penalty for the violation of this act, repealing all laws inconsistent herewith, and declaring an emergency,' approved March 1, 1867." The measure was read and referred to the Committee on Rights and Privileges.

He presented—in the course of the next few days—bills, petitions, or resolutions relating to the investment of county funds in railroad stocks, to the revision of laws regulating interest, and to the improvement of methods of collecting delinquent taxes.

Then came the reading of a petition which must have rung more strangely on the ears of Indiana legislators of the day than had his suggestion that there was a necessity to further protect game. On the morning of Friday, February 19th, 1869:

"Mr. Fuller presented a petition from sundry ladies of Warrick County for a *prohibitory* liquor law . . . which was referred to the Committee on Temperance."

To the horror of most American males, there had begun to

be rumors of something originating in England called the Temperance Movement as early as the 'Thirties. At first it had not been taken seriously by anyone except a minority of ministers of the gospel of dissenting faiths and some ladies of the bluestocking class. Eventually it had gained support from some odd and unsuspected sources—one of these being the Ohio River town of Lawrenceburg, hitherto not known for sobriety, where the local chapter of a militant organization of fraternal-benevolent tinge, the "Sons of Temperance," had draw up a moving petition aimed at the downfall of the liquor traffic as early as 1848, and had mailed a copy to one of the moral periodicals of the day, THE FAMILY VISITOR. Whether the petition actually reached the Legislature, to whom it was addressed, is not known but certainly THE FAMILY VISITOR received its publicity copy and made much of it. If the legislators did see it, or hear it read, it was probably a source of amusement. Indiana politicians as a body took no stock in temperance even then, let alone in prohibition.

(Perhaps it is significant that the city of Lawrenceburg in modern days seems to gather a large proportion of its corporate well-being from one of the world's largest distilling companies whose buildings, on a hill back of the town, completely dominate the Lawrenceburg landscape.)

Smile as they must have, the Indiana legislators were not through with temperance propaganda. In 1849 an Indiana state temperance convention was held and it, too, directed a lengthy memorial to the House and Senate.

The tide, though the legislature may have chosen to ignore it, was rising early and unexpectedly strong.

But while it had gained followers with the passing years, it was still not the sort of movement that anyone engaged in politics, especially Indiana politics, would be expected to endorse. Representative Fuller must have put great reliance on his oft-described impressive physique when he dared to read this petition from his county on the floor of the Indiana House of Representatives!

There was, as far as the record shows, no legislative action

taken upon the earnest plea of those good ladies of Warrick.

In the winter of 1868-69, Benoni S. Fuller began what would be his last session as a member of the Indiana House of Representatives. One suspects that his fellows, Republican and Democrat alike, had grown a bit doubtful of putting him forward, in view of the radical and daring stand he had taken in opposition to the entrenched interests of distillers, county sheriffs and assessors, for he was appointed to unimportant committees only—that on Banking, the State Prison South, and Public Printing.

If those appointments imply that there was an attempt to intimidate him, it was ineffectual: at the first opportunity Fuller moved to suspend other business and re-introduced his bill to regulate sheriffs' mileage. The House, abashed in the face of his persistence (and probably trusting the Senate to kill the measure anyway) let it go through a second reading—after having added several dozen amendments.

A few days later, Mr. Fuller brought about an adjournment in the midst of a feckless discussion for which either Indiana University or Purdue University—or possibly both—should thank him. Various Representatives were trying to introduce a measure which would, depending upon which proponent won, either saddle Indiana University with a College of Agriculture, or set up such an institution independently in some unspecified location which we can guess would have been inappropriate and which we know, in view of state finances at the time, would have had penurious support. As later appeared, Mr. Fuller had a motive in this move to adjourn: he wished to gain time for consideration so that some intelligent decision could be made.

He got it done, and by reason of his persistent maneuvering, there should stand on the Purdue University campus, only slightly below that of John Purdue, a statue of Benoni Stinson Fuller. This is the story:

At nine o'clock on the morning of April 28th, 1869, showing that grasp of parliamentary procedure by which he had distinguished himself in his first days in office, Representative Fuller moved to "dispense with the reading of the journal . . . to

suspend the order of business and take up the report of the special committee on House bill No. 347, for the location of the Agricultural College."

His motion was defeated, 39 to 29, but he bided his time and, late that afternoon:

"Mr. Fuller offered the following resolution:

"Resolved, That we now proceed to locate the Agricultural College, and for that purpose the Clerk shall now proceed to call the roll of the members, and as each member's name is called, he shall designate the place of his choice . . ."

There was some parliamentary skirmishing and Fuller revised his resolution by adding, *"Provided* that any member wishing to present the claims of any location for said location shall be allowed twenty minutes to do so before the roll is commenced."

There were, thereafter, further maneuvers (which may very possibly have been inspired by Mr. Fuller himself, who had obviously had from the beginning some idea of where *he* believed the "Agricultural College" should be located) but before the afternoon was over:

"Tippecanoe County having received a majority of all the votes cast, it was declared the choice of the House for the location of the Agricultural College."

The Senate eventually concurred and prosperous and generous old John Purdue, a private and disinterested citizen, made a donation of money and land. Richard Owen (prematurely senile son of Robert, the visionary who had founded New Harmony) was chosen to organize the school. After Owen had fiddled with grandiose plans for a few years and then conveniently died (having drunk embalming fluid tendered to him as "mineral water" by his paretic New Harmony friend Achille Fretageot) a new head for the institution was found and it opened—as Purdue University.

But still that modern institution will not have fully justified its existence until it erects that suggested statue to Benoni Stinson Fuller, without whose services Purdue would have been only a minor adjunct to Indiana University, that great and older institution at Bloomington, Indiana.

Representative Fuller had not completed his services to the House in this session but no further measures of comparable importance presented themselves to demand his attention. His Indiana career was not ended but henceforward it would continue again in the higher realm of the State Senate.

There had been some changes in districts since his first term and when he again announced his candidacy, was nominated and elected, he was seated for the session of the winter of 1870-71 as joint senator from Warrick and Spencer counties only. At Indianapolis and back in the upper house again, he immediately assumed his old role as parliamentary expediter and was placed on important committees: Federal Relations, Expenditures, Banks, and Roads.

Now Senator Fuller—already the proponent of tax reform, higher education, conservation, and prohibition—became involved in the discussion of an even more radical reform idea. On January 10th, Senator Othniel Beeson of Wayne “presented a petition from sundry citizens of Jay county asking that the Constitution of the State be so amended as to remove all legal and political disabilities of women.” Senator Beeson moved that it be referred to a special committee of five and Senator Fuller was one of the 27 who voted favorably. (There were 22 nays.) Fuller was appointed a member of the special committee.

That such a radical petition was ever even read was remarkable; that consideration of it went this far amounted to a miracle.

Shortly Fuller took up, at the senatorial level, the matter of improvement in the collection of delinquent taxes in which he had tried unsuccessfully to interest the House of Representatives years before. This time he began at the bottom:

“Resolved, that the committee on finance enquire what legislation is necessary to enable the County Treasurers to collect the delinquent taxes, and report by bill or otherwise.”

The resolution was adopted.

Within the next week Senator Fuller introduced, and moved along their way to passage, two more of those technical measures designed to improve the processes of the state courts in

which we have noted his interest previously. These were Nos. 25 and 52. He also introduced another conservation measure, this one to "encourage the destruction of foxes and wildcats."

He introduced (again following up an effort he had made in the House of Representatives) "Senate Bill No. 59. A bill for fixing the rate of interest on money, and repealing all laws in conflict therewith, and declaring an emergency." It was read and passed to a second reading.

The same day he reported favorably for the special committee that had considered his own Senate Bill No. 25 (it proposed to regulate the terms of certain circuit courts) and the Senate concurred. He again presented his old bill for the protection of wildlife, which had passed by the House and been approved, but not voted upon, by the Senate on March 11th, 1867. This time he got it passed to a second reading.

On January 24th he introduced another reform measure in, for him, a new field:

"Senate Bill No. 112. A bill to provide for the election of a supervisor and board of commissioners for the benevolent institutions of the State, and prescribing some of the duties of such officers, and repealing all laws in conflict therewith, and declaring an emergency for the taking effect thereof." This was passed to a second reading.

While the state at this time maintained an asylum for the insane, a school for the blind, and a few similar institutions, the above measure was certainly aimed at pauper care on the county or township level. Americans who would shortly read an exceedingly popular novel by Edward Eggleston (entitled *The Hoosier School-Master*) published that year, realized that the lot of the recipient of public charity was not a happy one in Indiana. The southern Indiana novelist and the southern Indiana senator were evidently both familiar with the situation.

Again Senator Fuller returned to the subject of prohibition: this time he bravely attacked the liquor evil himself, unprotected by the skirts of the ladies of Warrick. The sensible measure he introduced was:

"Senate Bill No. 133. A bill declaring any person who is

in the habit of becoming intoxicated to hold any office of public trust, prescribing the duty of county commissioners and judges of the Supreme Court in such cases, and making it a misdemeanor for any one to sell or give any intoxicating drinks, except cider, to any one who is an habitual drunkard, prescribing punishment therefor, and declaring an emergency."

No one who has not made a dispassionate study of the intimate relationship between politics and whiskey in the day of our grandfathers can conceive of the pure nerve Senator Fuller showed in introducing such an iconoclastic measure. Out of respect for (or fear of) its author, his fellow Senators passed it to a second reading—probably confident that it would be side-tracked eventually, as it was.

Reporting for the Committee on Roads a few days later, he tried to expedite the passage of a bill designed to assist in the construction of plank or macadamized turnpikes. This bill, Senator Fuller remarked tactfully, had *then been pending since January 15th, 1852*. (He did not so state, but it had evolved from the original research, resulting in a famous book¹³ on the subject by Robert Dale Owen of New Harmony, another son of the celebrated Robert Owen.) Senator Fuller's report was followed by some typical political shillyshallying but was passed along for further consideration. (In view of the nineteen years that had elapsed since its introduction, this action may not be considered to be precipitous.)

Senator Fuller then immediately made a report for the Committee on Banks. It was routine, so we shall not consider it here—although Indiana banks were then, Heaven knows, eminently eligible for some legislative strictures.

A day or two after, he again brought up the subject of roads, this time to clear some technical difficulties in connection with their chartering. Senator Fuller did not know it, but the measure that Robert Dale Owen had originated and that he was now promoting, was on the immediate verge of outliving its use-

13. Owen, Robert Dale—*A Brief Treatise on the Construction and Management of Plank Roads*. New Albany, Ind. 1850.

fulness: had their construction been pushed through in the Eighteen-fifties the plank roads would have been of great utility: now—the legislature having dallied typically for almost two decades—their day of usefulness was almost over. No discredit there *either* to Mr. Owen or Senator Fuller.

He had exposed himself to the alarm (even possible ridicule) of his fellow senators by his championship of a prohibition measure and his willingness to discuss women's suffrage. Now Senator Fuller did not hesitate to rise and present the findings of the committee on the latter subject to his bearded Victorian fellows. We shall never know whether or not Senator Fuller actually believed in women's suffrage himself: his statement on the floor does not indicate whether he was in the majority or the minority. Whatever his view, he rose to the occasion:

"Mr. President:

"A majority of your select committee, to whom was referred sundry petitions and resolutions relating to the submission of the question of female suffrage . . . with a view of so amending the constitution of the State as to permit women to vote, have duly considered the same, and a majority of said committee respectfully report that they regard the submission of said question as undesirable by the people and inexpedient at this time.

"Mr. Beeson [that Othniel from whom we have previously heard] submitted the following report:

"To the President of the Senate:

"The undersigned, a minority of the select committee on woman's rights, in compliance with the terms of Senate Resolution No. 38 . . . beg leave to submit the following proposed amendment to the constitution of the Senate.

"Othniel Beeson

"R. S. Dwiggins

"A joint resolution, proposing an amendment to the constitution, by adding to the second article, a section conferring on women of the age of twenty-one years and upwards the right to vote . . ."

There was more to the motion presented by Mr. Beeson and Mr. Dwiggins, but that shows the trend. Without being ac-

quainted with the domestic arrangements of either of them, we may assume (as their fellow senators undoubtedly did) that they were henpecked. We can be sure of one thing: Senator Fuller was at the time a widower: any sentiments he may have entertained were at least his own.

There was a special session of the Indiana State Legislature beginning in the month of October, and Benoni S. Fuller was a hold-over senator therein. His leadership was immediately recognized, as evinced by the fact that he was chosen by his party associates to place in nomination the name of a prospective President, *pro tempore*. His candidate was defeated—but that was nothing, nominated as he was by a *Democrat* in Reconstruction days. The nomination was only a gesture anyway; the defeat embarrassed Senator Fuller not a whit. Next day he revived a measure that he had introduced months before:

“Senate Bill No. 7. An act to repeal an act, entitled ‘An act to authorize aid to the construction of railroads, by counties and townships taking stock in and making donations to railroad companies,’ approved May 12, 1869, and declaring an emergency.”

That act Benoni Fuller wished to repeal had been a revival of the one that had caused Isham Fuller and his fellow legislators the trouble they had faced back in the 'Forties. On the books again it was once more milking the state of funds through the waste and graft it encouraged. Had Benoni succeeded in getting it repealed he would have saved Indiana counties and townships further terrific losses. He failed, either because of legislative short-sightedness or the liberality of the railroad lobby. Take your choice.

In this special session, he served on the Committees on Elections, Education, Military Affairs and County and Township Business. We need not speculate as to why he was not on that “Committee on Temperance.” He had gone too far afield in this matter: he had had the effrontery to *advocate* it!

Little business was transacted at this special session, though the legislators present undoubtedly collected their *per diem* fees: but that was not the last special session of the Indiana

State Legislature at which nothing was done, by a great many.

At the regular session in the winter of 1872-73, Senator Fuller was again present for the first roll-call: it was to be his last appearance, whether or not he had as yet made up his mind to that fact. This time he himself was nominated for the post of President of the Senate. He was defeated, 23 to 20, which was *still* a notably good showing for a minority member, and was appointed to the same committees on which he had served at the special session.

His first appearance on the floor was in the interest of what had become one of his pet projects, reform in the efficiency of the Courts. Says the JOURNAL OF THE SENATE:

"Mr. Fuller introduced Senate Bill No. 200—an act in relation to jury trials, to prevent the continuance of causes, trial by jury, after the commencement of the trial, by reason of sickness of one or more of the jurors, and repealing all laws in conflict with this act, and declaring an emergency."

It was read a first time—and dropped without comment.

He introduced another measure toward judicial reform.

"Senate Bill No. 208—an act to amend section nine of 'An act concerning the mode of proceeding in criminal cases, defining felonies and misdemeanors, and prescribing the punishment therefor,' approved June 17, 1852, and providing an emergency."

This, likewise, was read once and dropped—even though it, like other worthwhile measures, had now been apparently under consideration for twenty years.

His next move was toward another reform, probably considered as much of an infringement on constitutional rights by the hog-owning Indiana State Senators as had Fuller's assault upon their right to drink in public, and fully as progressively reasonable:

"Senate Bill No. 255—a bill to prevent the owners of hogs having cholera from letting the same run at large."

The bill was read and dropped, enabling Indiana farmers—ignorant and enlightened alike—to assure themselves of a monetary loss running into dozens of millions of dollars

in the course of the following eighty or ninety years.

Senator Fuller's next measure was sound enough in theory but was then, and is still, hopeless of enforcement: it was designed "to prevent betting on elections." Like many an honest reformer, the Senator had let his good intentions get the better of his judgment. That bill died a-borning, which was perhaps just as well.

Senator Fuller took further interest in the matter of the "state agricultural college," now referred to in the JOURNAL OF THE SENATE as "Perdue University." (It is unfortunate that, in view of old John Purdue's generous gift of \$200,000 to the state, the legislators could not arrange to have his name spelled correctly.) That the prospective "Perdue" had need of Fuller's support is evidenced by the majority report of the Committee on Education to whom had been referred "Senate Bill No. 170, making an appropriation of \$100,000 to the State Agricultural College, known as Perdue [sic] University." It was reported that the committee "have had the same under consideration, and would ask leave to report that owing to the depleted state of the Treasury, have thought proper to reduce the amount to be appropriated to \$60,000, to be divided into equal annual installments of \$30,000 each, and that when so amended would recommend the passage of the bill." That was at best a modest allotment to match John Purdue's private gift!

We may trust that the low-comedy grammar and syntax of this report reflects carelessness on the part of the reporter rather than the ignorance of the Committee's majority, but that majority must have been none too bright if it actually believed that a university plant could be constructed, equipped and staffed with \$60,000 over two years, even in that era of low costs.

Senator Fuller and Senator William R. Hough (of Henry and Hancock counties) presented a minority report recommending that the bill be reported back to the Senate and moved that the report be tabled until a later specified date for further consideration. Their motion was not agreed to: Senator Glessner moved that the minority report be tabled and it

was. Twenty-nine Senators voted aye; only seventeen opposed.

The majority report was then taken up. A motion was made by one Bunyan that the amount named be further cut to \$50,000. The fun was on but that is the story of Purdue University and its founding, not of Benoni S. Fuller—he had done his best for the cause but he had lost.

Throughout the remainder of this, his last session in the Indiana State Legislature, Benoni S. Fuller continued to present wise legislation, to throttle foolish or ambiguous proposals and to conserve the time of the Senate when he could do so.

For the Committee on County and Township Business he presented a measure which recognized, through the employment of boards of commissioners, the system of opening, altering and vacating streets, highways, and watercourses by the state and assessing benefits and damages to property owners affected. It was under this act that Indiana was enabled, decades later, to build her remarkably efficient system of state and federal highways.

He reported for the Committee on Education the Senate bill which enabled the state to take over from the counties the education of minor orphans of veterans of the Civil War—a humane movement that removed these unfortunates from the deleterious influence of the county “poor farms” or the stigma of residence at county orphanages.

He took heroic measures to end a lengthy and idiotic debate that grew out of “No. 234 . . . An act to prevent hogs from running at large” which, after several votes on amendments requiring the ringing of snouts and permitting the shooting of offensive strays by injured parties, finally evoked the following product of the mind of Senator William O’Brien, of Hamilton and Tipton counties: “*Provided further*, That if said hogs belong to the breed, commonly called Elm Peelers, the parties suffering them to run at large shall be required to tie a knot in the tail of each hog to prevent them crawling through fences.” Fuller rose with various forms of protest on four occasions during this feast of intellect and finally succeeding in having the bill and its amendments referred to another—

hopefully, more intelligent—committee of his associates.

It is interesting to note that this O'Brien, advocate of the tail-knotting measure, had been one irrevocably opposed to expending *any* funds on the establishment of the state agricultural college.

Fuller returned to the liquor question. A House bill had been presented, "No. 327—a bill to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquors, to provide against the evils resulting from any sale thereof, to furnish remedies for damages suffered by any person in consequence of such sale, prescribing penalties . . ."

The Senator, evidently having pondered the wisdom or expedience of temperance over prohibition, endorsed the measure but moved an amendment exempting "the sale of wine, beer, and cider." The amendment failed 25 to 22 but that was of little moment: it would be many years before Indiana was to be troubled seriously by either prohibition or temperance.

Again he showed his interest in Union veterans when he introduced "a joint resolution instructing our Senators and requesting our Representatives in Congress to use their influence in procuring an act of Congress by which the time for filing and prosecuting claims for pensions, by them due soldiers, may be extended."

And on the closing day Senator Fuller, evidently chosen for the honorable duty by his fellows, offered the resolution thanking the Lieutenant Governor for his services as president of the Senate.

Thus ended the career in the Indiana State Legislature of a wise and competent law-maker. His breed has not been too common, in Indiana or any other state.

But he was not through with politics, already he had broader fields in view. During the following year he campaigned successfully in his Congressional District for the seat open in Washington. He was elected but before he left Indiana he had a couple of domestic chores to perform: he sent his daughter, Mary, to New Albany to be entered as a student in DePauw

College, a school for girls,¹⁴ and, according to the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER for March 20th, 1875, took "up his residence on his farm near Boonville." Then he went on to Washington to occupy his chair in the House for the first session of the 44th Congress as Representative of the First Congressional District of Indiana. On the way he stopped at Rockport for a purpose which shortly became evident; at New Albany he visited his daughter.

Arrived in Washington he again found himself a Democrat in a Republican-dominated legislature. Ulysses S. Grant was President, Schuyler Colfax (a fellow-Hoosier) was Vice President and James G. Blaine was Speaker of the House. Grant did not head a particularly strong government—in his innocence he had a great talent for accepting bad advice from bad men—but oddly enough he did not hate the South as had his predecessor, North Carolina born Andrew Johnson, who had as his advocate vindictive, hag-ridden, Thaddeus Stevens. Johnson, a boy of the poor-white class, had probably had his figurative shins kicked on occasion in his youth by the slave-holding gentry around him: Stevens owed his misanthropy, probably, to the club-foot with which he had been born and for which he was inclined to blame God, his fellow men in general, and in the end and most of all, the Southern Confederacy. Neither Johnson's nor Stevens' attitudes were reasonable but their origins are easy to identify.

President Ulysses S. Grant's character was of a much more wholesome cast. After having fought the Confederacy successfully for half a decade he wished only for peace and his attitude was generally one of charity toward his former enemies.

Although the terms to describe their mental state had not yet been invented by psychologists (psychologists hadn't been

14. This is not to be confused with the modern DePauw University at Greencastle, Indiana. This "DePauw College" was a finishing school for girls; the institution at Greencastle was then known as Asbury Institute. When the New Albany establishment burned—a year later—the two were consolidated, Asbury taking the name of DePauw in payment for the assets of the other institution.

invented either, for that matter), Grant appears to have recognized the fact that many of the more bombastic and irreconcilable of the self-styled "Southrons" were merely cases of arrested development. They were the product of a unique exotic background for which they, themselves, were in no way responsible. The more obstreperous among them had early identified themselves with the feudal aristocracy of Sir Walter Scott's widely-read novels, as a modern ten year old may adopt the character of Hopalong Cassidy, Superman or—in an extreme case—that of Al Capone or of the late Mr. George Raft in one of his more abandoned roles.

These romantic figures of the Old South had played such games, but they had been reared to them and not even defeat in the greatest war the world had ever seen had brought some of them to a sense of reality. Johnson, Stevens, and their friends would have hung these persistent rebels out of hand: Grant believed that they might be awakened to usefulness.

U. S. Grant was elected to the Presidency on the Republican ticket in the fall of 1868 and took office the following March. His administration was faced with terrific responsibilities, for the country was torn asunder by questions as to the proper treatment of the formerly seceded states and the propriety of carpetbagging; as to the advisability of the resumption of specie payment and the control of that unbridled speculation which had as usual resulted from a war-time economy.

(Few recognized the fact at the time but the major factor from which originated economic dilemma heretofore unknown was the beginning of the age of technology which had, in the United States, experienced a premature birth brought about by the exigencies of war. That was a fortunate anticipation—the rest of the world has yet to catch up—but the problems devolving upon the arrival of that little stranger were serious indeed!)

Carpetbag rule was broken during Grant's administration—and along with it the Ku Klux Klan, another manifestation of Sir Walter Scottism that had become as offensive as ever were the ills it was expected to cure—some order was brought into

the chaos of Negro government in the deepest of the Deep South and the country's foreign affairs were placed upon a basis appropriate to the country's honor. There were murmurs—even a few screams—from both Northern and Southern irreconcilables, but the country was unquestionably returning to unity.

Financial speculation was rampant, however. Pirates of the Jay Gould ilk still ran wild and no federal machinery had been set up to hold them within decent bounds. There was a panic—a brief one—in 1872-73, brought on largely by wildcat operations in railroads and lands. In the midst of it Grant was elected for a second term but in the next election, that of 1874, a good many Democratic congressmen gained seats in the house—one of whom was Benoni Stinson Fuller.

These newly-elected Democrats moved immediately to resume the use of specie to replace the paper currency of war time. That was a measure generally recognized as necessary but theretofore neglected. President Grant himself is believed to have favored resumption but certain of his advisors, even members of his cabinet, opposed him. Those of the clique in opposition were to eventually meet what Representative Fuller would have called in simple Indiana idiom "their come-uppance," but not before they had made every effort to betray not only the nation but also their great chief for their own private gain. When their time came, President Grant—disillusioned as he was—demanded that they receive their just deserts: there was no Presidential cover-up for *that* mink coat, hotel bill, and deep-freeze scandal. In their exposure *some* members of the legislative branch of government did their full duty—among them being Representative Fuller.

But Fuller was wise enough to make no notable bid for fame at the beginning of his first session. He knew full well that any freshman from the Midwest backcountry who made too much of a show in the beginning was likely to be pocketed by more experienced associates of both his own and the opposition party. His wisdom got him appointed to the then very important Committee on Public Lands.

In 1875 the United States still had many millions of acres

of public lands and their equable distribution, and the protection of them from both the marauding Eastern capitalists who had wormed their way into President Grant's confidence and from the equally unprincipled backwoods squatters, was a great national problem. Fuller gave this committee his best efforts, meanwhile confining himself to doing a sound, competent job of representing his district—which was, as in the case of his father in the Indiana House of Representatives, exactly what he had been elected to do.

In this first session he introduced no bills and his appearances on the floor were limited to the offering of sundry petitions from his constituents. Interestingly enough, the majority of these were special pleas from those Union veterans and their dependents for whom he had already shown so much concern; next in number came petitions for restitution dating back to expenditures or losses in Civil War days. There was only one of national significance—in favor of the establishment of a uniform duty on imported crockery, a measure probably prompted by one of the manufactories which had sprung up along the Ohio River in southern Indiana. Even so, it was for the general good, in view of the chaotic state of the national import tariff regulations following the Civil War.

He soon became widely known and sufficiently popular with his fellow-representatives and the press to become subject of yarns, true or untrue. We shall never know which is which. One of these, published in the EVANSVILLE COURIER and attributed to its "Washington correspondent," was reprinted in the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER for January 15, 1876:

"There is a good story told about your worthy Congressman, Hon. Benoni S. Fuller. Mr. Fuller is distinguished for his gallantry, and a few Sundays ago, it is said, he took the widow lady with whom he is boarding to the *Metropolitan* Church. As soon as he entered the door, the usher bowed profoundly, and beckoning him to follow, marched up the aisle, and pushed him into an elegantly upholstered pew, and locked the pew door. A few moments afterward President Grant came in and made his way leisurely to the Presidential pew, but finding it

locked, was compelled to take a seat in the rear. The strong resemblance between your Representative and President Grant, had deceived the usher, and Mr. Fuller was thereby permitted an honor never bestowed upon anybody not intimately connected with the royal family."

During his first term Representative Fuller (although it must be noted that here in Indiana we then would have referred to him as *Congressman* Fuller) had given satisfaction to the home-folks; the EVANSVILLE COURIER gave him a boost when it stated on February 12th, 1876:

"Hon. Benoni S. Fuller, has made a good impression upon his fellow members and enjoys the respect and confidence of all. He is quiet, but alive to the business of the House. He is always in his seat and is very courteous and attentive to those of his constituents, regardless of party, who visit Washington. The Committee sent here to secure the introduction of a bill establishing a United States District Court at Evansville, received the most cordial assistance from Mr. Fuller. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether they could have got a hearing before the Judiciary Committee had it not been for his untiring efforts to that end. The Committee had the positive assurance of the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee that the bill would be reported to the House with a recommendation that it pass at an early day."

He cannot be criticized as neglectful of his orphaned daughter—far from it—as is attested by the following "human interest story" that the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER quoted on March 18th, 1876, from the NEW ALBANY LEDGER-STANDARD. DePauw "College" at New Albany, in which Benoni had enrolled his daughter Mary L. before he went to Washington, had been gutted by fire, in the course of which, according to the New Albany newspaper:

"A very affecting scene occurred at the College yesterday. Mary L. Fuller, the ten year old daughter of Hon. Benoni S. Fuller, Congressman from the First District, after her fright was over, coolly went to her room while the fire was all around and about it, and took a large photograph of her father from

the wall, hugged it closely to her and triumphantly walked into the yard, leaving her clothing and other property to perish in the flames. She is the only daughter of Judge Fuller, who has been not only a father, but has reared her since her mother's death some eight years ago."—which, overly-emotional or not, is a pretty good recommendation of Benoni Fuller as a parent.

In the summer, Representative Fuller campaigned successfully for a second term in Congress but he also found time for another important project. It may be recalled that as he traveled to Washington for the first time he had stopped, not only at New Albany to see his daughter, but also at *Rockport*, purpose then not stated. After the election in the fall the reason for that visit becomes clear. On December 9th, 1876, the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER stated:

"Married—on the 26th of November 1876, at the residence of the bride's mother by the Rev. W. L. Nourse, the Hon. Benoni S. Fuller, of Boonville to Mrs. Mary Emma Lynes, of Rockport. The marriage ceremony was performed in the presence of a number of the bride's relatives and a few friends of the groom, after which the bridal couple returned to Boonville, and after receiving congratulations of his friends and neighbors left immediately for Washington where they will remain during the present session of Congress.

"The bride is a sensible young woman whom we've had the pleasure of knowing many years, and heartily congratulate our honored Congressman in winning such a suitable person."

After two previous disappointments, Representative Fuller was trying matrimony a third time.

Again, in order to explain an episode, we must go ahead of the logical sequence of our story.

We have noted that, toward the end of Isham Fuller's life, he had married the young widow Agnes Wilson Fitzgerald, an Irish emigrant to the Midwest, and had had by her three children of his declining years, Hannah Maria, Thomas and William Wilson, half-brothers and sister of Benoni. These three had been orphaned in their early youth by the death of their father, Isham.

By the time Benoni Stinson Fuller entered Congress these were grown young folks. We shall discuss Hannah Marie and William Wilson more fully in their turn but we must glance at Thomas now because he had an indirect influence upon the future of his much-older brother, Benoni.

Thomas had grown up, first on the Fuller family farm, later at the home of his mother and that well-loved man, called "Uncle Jimmie" Hinman by all his Fuller in-laws, whom she married as her next husband. (In the Midwest the title "Uncle" bestowed by distant kin and friends upon an elderly man was a guarantee of his good character and kind heart.) Thomas had received some sort of adequate education, had become a lawyer and had married a young widow, Mrs. M. B. Derr, whose family home was Rockport, Indiana.

After their marriage, Thomas and his wife had entertained the wife's sister as a visitor in their Boonville home. She also was a young widow, Mrs. Mary Emma Lynes. Naturally in the course of her visit she had met her new brother-in-law's distinguished half-brother, U. S. Representative Benoni Stinson Fuller. The resulting romance had evidently flowered apace. We have read of its culmination in the quotation from the columns of the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER.

This marriage was to end in the worst of all the tragedies that befell Benoni Fuller—for this "Mary Emma" is the "Aunt Em" of Mrs. Moore's already quoted recollection: the one who left him and married the race-horse-man-sheriff-farmer, Gurley Taylor.

That election of 1876 was memorable in many ways, few of them happy. In the presidential race Democrat Samuel J. Tilden received a majority of 250,000 popular and 19 electoral votes, with 20 votes claimed by *both* parties. Eventually 22 electoral votes were questioned (there had indeed been much chicanery in the election) and Congress appointed an electoral commission to name the winner. Congress had a Republican majority—and, naturally, so did the commission. The commission declared itself satisfied that the electoral vote had been challenged justly and Rutherford B. Hayes, Republican from

Ohio, was elected by Congress, by a majority of one Congressional vote, to be 19th President of the United States.¹⁵ Whatever the rights or wrongs of his election, the bumbling Hayes had the distinction of being one of our weakest presidents.

We may suppose that Representative Fuller voted for Tilden. He himself was affected only favorably by the squabble, for with it, and in spite of the loss of the Presidency, the Democrats had gained some ground. He and his fellows in the party had a better chance to make their presence felt.

There was a second session of the 44th Congress, and in it Representative Fuller began to show an increasing awareness of national problems. There was, as well, an awakening on the part of his fellows to the value of judgment developed by his own sound Hoosier upbringing as a contribution to congressional debates. He made more appearances on the floor, having found his congressional legs. He still introduced some petitions of a local nature—though some of these were more important to the national welfare than others about which older hands in Congress had ranted for days on end—but his horizon had obviously broadened.

There was a petition for a new Indiana post road (for which an indubitable need existed) and there were two for the relief of individual veterans but there were also seven petitions from various individuals and banks of Indiana for a much-needed repeal of the current bank tax laws; another, equally important, "for cheap telegraphy" and a third (national in scope but probably unpopular since it was wished off on one as young in service as Fuller) for making an appropriation for "sundry civil expenses of government."

In this session Fuller also introduced eight bills. Although six of them were for individual relief and pensions within his constituency, the fact that his minority party leadership permitted him to introduce them is, in itself, evidence that he was gaining recognition.

During all three sessions of the 45th Congress, Represent-

15. Haworth, P. L.—*The Hayes-Tilden Election*.

ative Fuller was present and voting except for one week's leave of absence voted him by his associates, purpose not specified. At the beginning he was re-appointed to the Committee on Public Lands (in which he continued to take an active interest) and also assigned to the Committee on Education. The latter was a rare piece of discernment on the part of legislative powers: the inherent intelligence of appointing a former educator who had also been a worker in the field of educational improvement at state level to a place on a Committee on Education is not common governmental practice, then or now.

In the first session Fuller presented five petitions; four for individual claims and pensions and one by the citizens of Evansville "to increase the pay of letter-carriers." He introduced nine bills covering pensions and restitution for individual veterans and their dependents (not excessive, taking a Congressional average) and seven of national importance. These latter included bills to repeal a certain section of a fiscal law then in force, to repeal the act for the resumption of specie payments and the (then current) bankrupt law. Other measures he sponsored were designed to establish courts therein, to protect settlers on some types of public lands, to require the return of certain public lands which had been granted in aid to help establish railroad and telegraph lines, and to equalize the bounties of soldiers who served in the Civil War.

Benoni Stinson Fuller's interests were widening; they were strong, particularly, in matters relating to the disposition of the public lands, the improvement of the banking system and public education, and of better transportation. All these were of tremendous contemporary significance.

His appearance in the annals of the second session show a still greater awakening to the national concept.

He presented eleven petitions but none were private or local: all were of considerable consequence to American commerce, relating to establishing uniformity or reform in tariff, the granting of patents, and allied matters.

There were eight bills this time, of which but three were private—for pensions or the relief of veterans. The others were

of national significance: three related to the protection and disposal of the public lands, one was designed to safeguard the Hot Springs of Arkansas to the public use in perpetuity and the last was a measure by which he planned to promote the issue of Treasury notes to supplant the greenbacks and those state bank notes which even as late as the 'Seventies continued to hamper the smooth flow of American commerce. During the session, he also arose to make remarks on the bills presented by three other representatives.

In the third session, Fuller's last in the House, he reached his full development in the national picture: he had become a statesman—and one of some stature:

He introduced three petitions. Two had their origin in the Indiana Senate and regarded important defects in legislation governing Federal courts and interstate commerce. The third was a petition "By the ladies of Lilly Dale, Ind., for the enforcement of the anti-polygamy law." That, today, is an amusing title: in the 'Seventies, with a contemporary recurrence of anti-Mormon sentiment much in the public eye, it was a matter of moment—even in Lilly Dale, Ind.

There were fewer bills than formerly—six in all, two related to pension or relief for constituents but the other four were of genuine—in one case tremendous—importance. One of the latter was another effort to secure the forfeiture of public lands granted to railroad and telegraph companies which had not fulfilled their contracts. He had introduced it before: he now tried again. It did not pass before his retirement: whether it went through eventually or not, it was an honest measure, designed for the public good in times when enormous raids were made on the public domain by the simple expedient of organizing a railroad company, getting a grant of public land to support it through the aid of friends in Congress, selling the land at a profit—but failing to complete the road. Two bills favored what Fuller had adopted as a project—the protection of the rights of legitimate settlers on public lands. The last of his bills proposed to extend the land laws of the United States to cover the newly purchased Territory of Alaska, just then ripe

to be exploited if left unguarded, as the country entered the era in which it suffered most, in proportion to its assets, from exploitation.

But Benoni Fuller did not come back to see these good measures secured. He retired over the protests of both his constituents and many of his fellow Congressmen. He can hardly be blamed; those were still tough days for a conscientious Representative of Democratic persuasion—as tough, fully, as was the period of Roosevelt II and his successor for a Republican—and Benoni Stinson Fuller had reasons stronger than mere weariness and frustration. One of them he stated quite clearly to those who urged him to give an answer: “Honest politics don’t pay.”¹⁶ But there was upon him, probably, a pressure still greater than his embarrassment at the necessity of close figuring to make financial ends meet in Washington, at home and traveling in between:

Mary Emma Fuller had not liked Washington or politics from the beginning of her experience in them at the time of her marriage. She was a woman of strong mind and she impressed her distaste upon her husband. She may well have been justified in her feeling—there was plenty of sham and subterfuge in the pursuit of statesmanship at both Indianapolis and Washington—but she made an error in that she not only urged her husband to abandon his career but she planned another for him.

As Benoni’s votes show, he had picked up a good general knowledge of both his state’s and his country’s laws. Mary Emma, a good deal younger and less experienced than he, convinced herself that Benoni could gain sufficient knowledge of practical law, in a short time, to become a successful attorney with a practice in Boonville. She undertook to convince him, also.

Benoni allowed himself to be persuaded. Perhaps he was somewhat influenced by the fact that his brother-in-law, Stephen Dial, had died the year before leaving a good law practice.

16. Feature story in the INDIANAPOLIS STAR, May 28, 1939.

The Fullers had purchased a commodious frame house in Boonville, during the years in Congress, and to it they returned instead of to the farm. Benoni Fuller began to study law but—at the age of fifty-one—he found the going hard. There was, by the way of income, whatever was earned by the neglected farm and, apparently, some fees from lobbying missions to Washington. The total was not enough. It would not maintain the standard to which the Fullers had accustomed themselves.

Then Benoni, plagued by the difficulty of learning a profession in his maturity, worried by insufficient income and perhaps an over-urging by Mary Emma that may have amounted to nagging, developed a mild but disturbing heart-trouble. There was little more studying of law and no more lobbying. Things went rapidly from bad to worse and presently Mary Emma took what, in that age dominated by the prudery of Victoria of England, was a drastic course indeed. She sued her husband for divorce in the very circuit court in which she had planned for him to distinguish himself. The divorce was granted.

No one then understood exactly what had happened. Both Mary Emma and Benoni were admired by all who knew them. They had seemed, as his niece wrote, "the very personification of the ideal couple."

After the divorce decree, Mary Emma Fuller began to accept the attentions of Gurley Taylor, mentioned before, farmer, horseman, and one-time Sheriff of Warrick. (He had been elected by a majority of 275 at the time Warrick County gave Benoni a majority of 411 for Congress.) Taylor must have had considerable romantic appeal: Mary Emma could scarcely have been satisfied with an ordinary man after Benoni—that "man of considerable culture . . . of fine physique . . . greatly admired . . ." ¹⁷

On December 27th, 1887, Mary Emma Fuller married Gurley Taylor and took the children to live at the Taylor farm.

Thereafter, his spirit broken, Benoni Fuller did little or noth-

17. *Biographical History of Eminent and Self-made Men* . . .

ing. He became a loafer on the Court house square—an erudite, cultured, genteel, and widely admired loafer—but a loafer none the less. There was a brilliant past behind him but he was a man robbed of incentive and completely broken.

From the comment of one who must have known him in those later days—but not earlier—we learn that even his personal appearance became that of a man who had met defeat and accepted it. During his later years, "He was a patriarchal town figure in linen duster, old straw-weave brown hat [with] a homemade walking stick. He trimmed his flowing beard on convention days, when he reappeared in party councils."¹⁸ We may take that descriptive picture as truth, since it is extracted from a newspaper story otherwise highly laudatory of its subject.

Where was that figure recalled by young Gertrude Moore? "Broad-shouldered; side-burns—and with his Prince Albert coat, high silk hat and cane . . . what a figure he made! He looked like a Kentucky Colonel ought to look?" Well, we know that the figure had fallen sacrifice to many, finally insupportable, domestic crises. The writer of the newspaper piece, who probably as a youth recalled Benoni Fuller's linen duster, straw hat, and untrimmed beard, had a province of memory that probably did not extend as far into the past as did Mrs. Moore's!

But, garbed in linen duster or in National Capitol Prince Albert, Benoni Fuller kept intact his powers of mind and spirit. An article from the BOONVILLE ENQUIRER of June 15, 1889, reassures us on *that* point—and still gives a glimpse, by inference, of the unhappy life he must have led:

"A DASTARDLY ASSAULT"

"On last Sunday evening a drunken character, named Jimmy Doyle made an attack upon ex-congressman Benoni S. Fuller, inflicting a severe but not dangerous wound on the outside of the thigh of the left leg, about two inches long and to the bone. He made several more strokes with the knife but was prevented from inflicting further injury by the . . . by-standers.

18. Feature story in the INDIANAPOLIS STAR, May 28, 1939.

"The circumstances as related by those present are about as follows: Doyle observing Mr. Fuller coming up the street he applied some ugly epithet and remarked that if he said anything to him, he would hurt him, at the same time taking out his pocket knife, which he placed back in his pocket open. Upon Mr. Fuller reaching the company, he took a seat near Doyle, when the latter at once opened a tirade of abuse upon him in relation to politics. Mr. Fuller becoming angered told Doyle he must not talk to him that way, at the same time slapping him in the face with the back of his hand, whereupon Doyle whipped out his knife and made the murderous assault while both were in a sitting position.

"The provoke and assault was entirely unexpected by Mr. Fuller, as he was unaware of any ill-feeling being harbored by Doyle against him. He is known as a mean, abusive, quarrelsome and worthless character, and has made similar attempts upon the life of other citizens. He was committed to jail, in default of bail."

Obviously Ex-Representative Fuller was occupying an accustomed seat in a familiar loafing place. Special seats on court house curbs are recognized as sacrosanct: there are such places in every county-seat town in the United States. While the large majority of the seat occupants are generally worthless—and a few of them may be positively vicious, as apparently was Boonville's Jimmy Doyle—there is also not uncommonly one among them who is cleanly-dressed, mannerly, who has seen better, sometimes even great days: once in a while he may be a Benoni Stinson Fuller. Usually the generality of the citizens of such a town continue for a time to respect that one man. They know the reason for his decline, condone his failure, and tend to remember his past achievements. Certainly that was Fuller's case, as witness the eulogies quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

Benoni Fuller spent his last years as a genteel visitor in the homes of various relatives. When he died in 1903, aged 78, but courtly of manner and distinguished in appearance as ever, it was at the home of his half-brother, William Wilson Fuller,

youngest of Isham's children. Benoni was then entirely without financial resources and had been, for some time, solely dependent upon the charity of his half-brother, who was himself an invalid supported mainly by the efforts of his young, charming, and terrifically energetic wife.

Ailing William Wilson Fuller, his wife, and other relatives probably combined their small ready cash assets to bury the old gentleman in a style to which his record as a public servant entitled him.¹⁹

That is the life of Benoni Stinson Fuller, as scant contemporary record shows it. *But*, on May 28, 1939, an Indianapolis newspaper of state-wide circulation ran a feature article (passages from which have already been quoted) under the byline "Special to THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR" and dated "Boonville, Ind., May 27" (which probably implies a local correspondent of Boonville origin and rearing.) The story runs:

"FRIENDS TO HONOR
FORGOTTEN LEADER

"Benoni Stinson Fuller
Dim Memory in Hearts
of But Few.

"May 28, 1939: Southern Indiana has all but forgotten Benoni Stinson Fuller, an outstanding political figure during the Civil War and through the reconstruction years. A native son of Warrick County, he was a dirt-farmer statesman for a quarter century.

"On Memorial Day a few friends will pay tribute at the graveside of their former home-town leader.

"Congressman Fuller declared at the height of his career, 'Honest politics don't pay,' and retired to his farm near Boonville.²⁰ For another quarter century he was a patriarchal town figure in linen duster, old straw-weave brown hat and carried a homemade walking stick. He trimmed his flowing beard only

19. Recollections of Thomas Dillingham.

20. Actually he retired to the *town*, not to his farm.


on convention days when he reappeared in party councils. His public career began when much of the old First district's population was engaged in helping run-away slaves flee north. As Warrick county's sheriff and state senator, Fuller said 'Let 'em,' and contrary to the party's principles and the vote of Warrick county against Lincoln (and for the Southern cause) he refused to become an official bloodhound. When the war was over his popularity carried him to Congress.

"His weed-grown grave is difficult to find in Old Cemetery except during one week in the year when the American Legion clears its tangled growth."

Knowing of his good works, and of the personal trials he underwent, we may be sorry to learn that Benoni Stinson Fuller's grave is "weed-grown . . . except during one week in the year" but we may rejoice, as would he, at this newspaper report of that pilgrimage in 1939.

Not many representatives in Congress, from Indiana or elsewhere, were ever remembered by name thirty-six years after their passing. Few of such as may have been remembered—and favorably—have ever inspired a pilgrimage to their final resting places. Congressmen, especially those who served only briefly and then retired because of their own personal principles ("Honest politics don't pay," Benoni said) are generally soon forgotten. Benoni Stinson Fuller was obviously a *singularly* honest and competent statesman: God rest him peacefully, after his earthly trials!

IV

HE eldest child of Isham and Amelia Hudson McMurt-ry Fuller was a daughter, Rachel, born on October 9th, 1822, at the family farm north of Boonville, Warrick County, Indiana.

Rachel had the same opportunity for early education as did her next younger brother Benoni, although it is not likely that she continued beyond what would now correspond to the sixth grade. Girls in Indiana did not often go farther than that in her day; there were plenty of the necessary domestic arts essential to the female to be learned at home, before one married at the age of seventeen or eighteen. That early classroom education may be supposed to have been sound, however limited: it certainly proved itself so in Benoni's case and there is no reason why Rachel should not have fared as well.

Rachel lingered somewhat beyond the average age of brides in the pioneer Midwest. She was a full nineteen years old when, on November 21st, 1841, she married young Lewis Allen Hinman, son of James Hinman and a neighbor of the Fullers.

Apparently Lewis was a farmer, or at least he was employed on a farm, for he and Rachel had been married only a short time when he was killed by a falling tree while cutting timber either for the market or to clear land for cultivation. Rachel's young grief may be imagined but her misfortune was nothing of great remark in her day and circumstances—such were the hazards of frontier life that most men and women could be expected to lose at least one spouse before their children were reared: Rachel's mother had been widowed once before Rachel

was born, her father would also be a widower before he died.

The young widow probably either went home or stayed with the Hinmans, realizing, when she could bring herself to think of the matter, that she would certainly marry again soon. On the frontier all young widows did. Rachel was a good catch; recalled as a handsome woman, she was also daughter of Isham, prosperous farmer and member of the State Legislature, and had already proved herself as cook and housekeeper.

Sure enough, local records show that on September 9th, 1845, she married Stephen D. Dial, a young man recently come to Warrick County from Ohio. Rachel was then almost twenty-three; Stephen about a year younger. Age differences were of little significance on the frontier—Rachel's mother, for instance, was seven years older than her husband.¹

Stephen Dial is believed to have been reared in Clermont County, Ohio, near the town of Batavia.² While there is no account of Stephen's own early education, a published biographical sketch of John C. Dial (almost surely his brother, who was born in Clermont County, Ohio, came to Warrick County, Indiana, and lived and died there) describes an experience that is likely similar to Stephen's: "His early educational advantages were limited to about two months every two years in the backwoods schools of that time. He received the greatest part of his education by private tutorage and at a very early age was a master of Smiley's arithmetic as taught at that time³ . . . he was considered a critical grammarian by his instructors."⁴ This John C. Dial was six years older than Stephen; perhaps by Stephen's

1. Ms. notes of Thomas J. Dillingham.

2. The only printed reference to his place of origin calls it "near Cincinnati" but Clermont is the next county east of that place. The census of 1850 shows two other Dials in Warrick County, Ind., within six years of Stephen's age and probably his brothers. Both are stated to have come from Clermont County, Ohio, one "from near Batavia." Probably all three came to Indiana from that same locality, where persons of their name still reside.

3. "Smiley's Arithmetic," copies of which are still extant, would puzzle most nuclear scientists.

4. Fortune—*Warrick and Its Prominent People*.

time they were holding school every year in Clermont County, and for more than two months of it.

Whatever his opportunities at schooling, Stephen obviously made the most of them, and in quality what he received must have been above the average of that enjoyed by the Indiana folk who later came to be his neighbors. Education undoubtedly moved west in that day.

It seems likely, also, that Stephen had come to Indiana with at least a little working capital, as the Ohio Dials were substantial people in those early days. Settled in Warrick County, he somehow found time to read law (although he may have begun this study before he emigrated) and was admitted to the bar. Besides he had, by the time of the census of 1850, acquired a homestead and become a property owner and taxpayer. Whether this property was a small farm or merely a residence is not known but either, in his time, represented a much greater investment than it would have in Isham Fuller's day. In the 'Fifties purchasers paid fifteen to twenty dollars an acre for improved land; a reasonably commodious house might cost as much as a thousand.

Mariah Caroline, first child of Stephen and Rachel Dial was born in 1848. In 1850, the United States Census shows the three Dials living at the family home with Rachel's brother Benoni, at that time the school teacher, as a boarder. As we have pointed out, Rachel's and Benoni's mother had died in 1849, Isham was often away attending the sessions of the State Legislature and the chances are that Isham's home was closed temporarily from time to time. Benoni and his unmarried sisters (if either *remained* unmarried thus far—a matter of which records do not make us certain) meanwhile stayed with related or friendly families. Perhaps the Dial home may have been near Benoni's school: in any case this should have been a pleasant arrangement, since Stephen Dial's and Benoni Fuller's subsequent careers show similar interests. They were no doubt of congenial tastes, very likely prompted by the example of their respective father-in-law and father, Isham Fuller.

Eventually the Dial's children included Mariah C., Lou, Rose

and the fourth, a son, Grant Dunnigan, who was adored—and spoiled—by his older sisters, as is usually the fate of boys so unfortunately born late into a family of girls.

From his office in Boonville, Stephen Dial practiced law quite successfully in southern Indiana courts and was the object not only of the respect of his neighbors but also of their affection. He had always been a Democrat in politics but there was no question of *his* position when the Civil War began.

Stephen Dial crossed the Ohio River to Owensboro and there, on November 17, 1862, enlisted in the Twelfth Kentucky Volunteer Cavalry, then organized for services in the Union forces. He was made Captain of Company D and served throughout the war in that capacity.

He had enlisted for a three year period but when, early in 1865, the fact became evident that the Confederacy was at last defeated, he followed the example of many older officers and enlisted men who were not then involved in actual combat and had become bored with garrison-duty inactivity and resigned his commission. The resignation is dated February 27, 1865.⁵

The Twelfth Kentucky Volunteer Cavalry was at that time attached to General George Stoneman's brigade which was on occupation duty in the District of East Tennessee. Such an assignment could not have been a very inspiring one to men who had actually seen combat: fighting in the area was long since over and East Tennessee, with its high percentage of Union sympathizers, offered few problems of resistance. Captain Dial, then about forty-two years of age, no doubt rightly believed that such duty should be handled by some younger man who did not have a dependent family and a long-neglected law practice back home.

The activity of the Twelfth had not been limited to garrison duty in the earlier phases of the war. The unit had suffered a loss of 20 to 25 per cent of its strength, killed in battle and dead of wounds, and there had been a particularly high rate

5. John H. Harney—*Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky*. Frankfort, Ky., 1866.

of mortality among those of its men who had been captured and held in the earthly hells that were Confederate military prisons.⁶ This high mortality may have been partly due to the circumstance that the regimental name under which members of the Twelfth were enrolled included the word "Kentucky." It was well known that an average citizen of the Confederacy felt far more resentment against a Union soldier from that state, believed by the Confederates to be rightly one of their own, than, for instance, they bore for a man from Massachusetts or New York.

Captain Dial and his comrades had an honorable record behind them when he returned to Boonville in the spring of 1865 and reopened his law office.

In the early Eighteen-seventies Stephen D. Dial succumbed to the urge which had moved his father-in-law, Isham Fuller, and his brother-in-law, Benoni S. Fuller and became a candidate for state representative on the Democratic ticket. (Benoni was then serving his last term in the Indiana Senate.)

He was elected on October 8th, 1872, but whatever pleasure he got from his victory was soon overshadowed; his wife, Rachel, died on November 18th following. Their children were grown and perhaps he hoped that his departure for Indianapolis and the legislative session of the winter of 1872-73 would furnish a temporary anodyne. The change of scene might be helpful, friends believed, for everyone knew that Stephen and Rachel had been very much in love and everything in Boonville—still a village of around seventeen hundred inhabitants—must remind him of his loss.

At Indianapolis he undertook his duties with quiet competence. He was the first of the Fuller kin in the state legislature who was permitted to begin his service under a governor of his own party; Thomas A. Hendricks had defeated his Republican opponent, a General Thomas M. Browne who, except for his defeat, seems to be little known to fame. But Hendricks' was by no means a Democratic administration. The only other

6. Official Records of Regimental Losses in the Union Army.

successful Democrat on the state ticket was the candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction. Hendricks did not even have a Lieutenant Governor of his own party: the Senate stood 27 to 23 against him and the House 54 to 46. That was a handicap, indeed, but his election in the face of this general sentiment was certainly a tribute to the personal popularity of Hendricks—or a crushing blow at Browne!

The first session in which Stephen D. Dial served was handicapped even beyond the bounds generally accepted by party politics in his day. The outgoing Legislature, bent on destruction, met in a special session on the 14th of November following the election (wherein it re-elected Oliver P. Morton to the United States Senate) redistricted the entire state for Federal representation, to the detriment, wherever possible, of Democrats, and—prompted by some odd strategy which may not be easily reconstructed—raised the salary of the Democratic Governor to eight thousand dollars per year. It appeared, to the newly-elected Senators and Representatives who would shortly be seated, that whatever thunder they may have anticipated loosing had been stolen.

There was published in Indianapolis in 1875 a volume which calls itself *An Illustrated History of the State of Indiana*, claimed to be "Sold only to subscribers." Possibly it was so sold, but its historical features are greatly exceeded in space occupied by the "Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Men of Past and Present," mentioned further along on the title page. The joint authors were a certain "C. DeWitt Goodrich and 'Prof.' Charles R. Tuttle." The pair had compiled many other such books throughout the eastern half of the United States, and had profited roundly from the fees they exacted from those who were chosen as subjects of the "Biographical Sketches." (We note, with pleasure, that no member of the Fuller line fell for the racket: none is represented.) However this particular production of the joint efforts of Messrs. Goodrich and Tuttle has one virtue: it was sent to press in the year 1874. Whatever sacrifices of scholarly virtue in favor of income it may have included, the account of governmental proceedings

as late as 1873 must have been fairly accurate—too many people, in 1874-75, would know the *facts* to admit of glossing over. *This*, what the Goodrich and Tuttle opus has to say of “Events of 1873-4,” must be pretty nearly accurate:

“The regular session of the legislature began. . . . in January, 1873, and soon after Governor Hendricks was inaugurated. In his address to the assembly he said: ‘The laws regulating our elections require your special attention. They do not restrain the corrupt, nor protect the votes of the people . . .’” Governor Hendricks went on at some length as to correctional measures—which we need not repeat here—but in his major premise he was certainly correct, as the Hayes-Tilden presidential contest later proved positively.

According to Messrs. Goodrich and Tuttle, the Governor continued by making “some excellent suggestions on representation reform in the same address. He said ‘In this connection I wish to call attention to the subject of representation reform, which, during the last ten years, has been advocated by some of the best minds, both in Europe and this country . . .’” Governor Hendricks should have been sufficiently astute to refrain from holding European opinion up as a model to Indiana legislators: apparently he wasn’t, and he continued his indiscretion: “‘In this State it seems yet to be regarded as right and proper for the majority to deny to the minority even that representation which an apportionment based upon population and contiguity of counties would give. . . .’”

Unless we are mistaken, and his hearers of Republican faith were weaklings indeed, they thereupon cried (in their hearts if not aloud) “For shame, for shame! Governor Hendricks! And after our party’s votes have elected you, when your own could not, after rejecting all your brother candidates except the Superintendent of Public Instruction!”

—So, due to this unfortunate opening address to the two houses assembled, Governor Hendricks got off to a poor start that did little good for his fellow Democrats in the legislature.

In order to view rapidly the accomplishments of the first two years of Hendricks’ administration (all in which Representative

Dial served) we may summarize the further account provided by Goodrich and Tuttle:

"Among the important acts of the session were the following: One abolishing the courts of common pleas, and dividing the state into thirty-eight judicial districts—one remodeling the divorce laws—one amending the school laws . . . one regulating the sale of liquors. (The latter is easily reconizable as that for which Representative Stephen Dial's brother-in-law, Senator Benoni S. Fuller, had long worked.)

"The following are the only causes upon which divorces can be granted under the new law: 1st. Adultery, 2nd. Impotency . . . 3rd. Abandonment for two years. 4th. Cruel and inhuman treatment . . . 5th. Habitual drunkenness . . . 6th. Failure of the husband to make reasonable provision . . . 7th. The conviction . . . of an infamous crime.

"The new liquor law provides that it shall be unlawful for any person, under penalty from ten dollars to fifty dollars fine, or from ten to thirty days in prison, to sell, barter, or give away intoxicating liquors . . . without a permit from the county commissioners . . . and even when the permit is so procured, the law is definite as to how the traffic is to be regulated, and is very stringent. . . ."

Goodrich and Tuttle comment upon the magnitude and obvious enthusiasm of the "temperance convention held at Indianapolis, in April, 1873" and the fact that the State's receipts in that year totaled "\$4,300,653.02, while disbursements were only \$4,115,457.55."

The authors further state that this left a "balance on hand at the close of the year of \$185,175.47"—an addenda which shakes our confidence in at least the mathematical ability of the scholarly Goodrich and the professorial Tuttle.⁷ Their arithmetic must have been at fault; it is inconceivable that the State of Indiana could possibly have had a deficit of *exactly* twenty dollars at the time Governor Hendricks took office. Surely Indiana was never so shamefully insolvent! But *any* balance

7. Goodrich & Tuttle—*An Illustrated History of the State of Indiana*.

simply *must* have been a few cents off the even dollar, one way or the other!

No matter what weakness they display in arithmetic, we must accept Goodrich and Tuttle's two final notes on the Hendricks' administration. They say "there is a legislative measure on foot to erect a magnificent new state capitol . . ." There was; it was duly erected and it still stands—although those who view it may not readily recognize the applicability of the term "magnificent." They further state that, in the election of October, 1874 (half way through Governor Hendricks' term, when Representative Dial was not again a candidate) "the Democrats carried the state by a fair majority . . ." Further, on this portion of the history of Indiana, Messrs. Goodrich and Tuttle sayeth not. Presumably they collected the fees from those they had blackmailed or intimidated into paying to be classed among the "Prominent Men of Past and Present" and moved on to some virgin field of endeavor.

Their further activities do not interest us at the moment: let us see what Representative Stephen D. Dial contributed to Indiana legislative affairs in the two years they have outlined:

He was appointed to the Committee on Reformatory Institutions and to that on Claims—both of which were of very considerable importance.

From the readiness with which he rose to introduce bills and resolutions from the very earliest days of the session it is clear that he (with every justification) considered himself to be, not a "freshman" entering upon a political career but rather a mature man (he was fifty) elected to represent his fellow citizens and intending to do his best toward that end. He neither toadied to his elders in politics nor pushed himself; he simply spoke his mind when the occasion seemed to require.

His first appearance on the floor (according to the JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES) was that upon which he "introduced House Bill No. 313—an act defining what counties shall constitute the fifteenth judicial district." That sounds like a local measure, but it was not, it aimed only to complete some business left disasterously unfinished by that

special session of the preceding legislature, intention of which had been, of course, to hamstring the administration of which Dial was a part. He did not push this bill: rather, he contentedly moved, after its first reading, that it be tabled for mature consideration.

The second bill he presented was a revival of a measure first introduced by his brother-in-law, Senator Benoni S. Fuller, years before. Benoni Fuller was aware of the advantage of railroad transportation but he was also cognizant of the fact that many contemporary railroad promoters, large and small, were crooks. In legislative measures Fuller introduced at state (and later national) level he tried to encourage legitimate railroad building while protecting the public from fly-by-night financiers. We may safely assume that State Representative Dial was acting upon both his own conviction and the mature opinion of State Senator Fuller when he introduced "House bill No. 348—an act to amend the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 18th, and 19th sections of an act to authorize and aid the construction of railroads by counties and townships, taking stock in and making donations to railroad companies, approved May 12, 1869, which bill was read . . . and referred to the Committee on Railroads." Representative Dial was obviously trying to revise the dangerous features of this act which Benoni Fuller had tried and failed to get repealed *in toto* during his last term in the state Senate. Obviously the two of them had consulted together and decided to try the less drastic action. They failed in this, as well: railroads were then at the height of their power, safely entrenched everywhere—including the inner circles of the Indiana State Legislature.

Dial also continued Fuller's fight for improvement in the method of assessing taxes and of collecting them. On February 1, 1873, he introduced "House bill No. 435—an act to repeal section 118 of an act entitled, 'An act to provide for a uniform assessment of property and for the collection and return of taxes thereon,' approved December 21, 1872"—while Benoni Fuller was serving in the Senate. It was "read a first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means" where it may still be

gathering dust. Indiana property taxes still appear to be assessed with the aid of a crystal ball and influence.

Representative Dial, freshman though he was, had by now been chosen to report for his committees on the floor: evidence that he was held in respect by his associates, but evidence, also, that in assuming these extra responsibilities he was driving himself harder than could reasonably have been required of the most conscientious legislator. His record throughout his first term was excellent, but he refused to permit the voters of Warrick County to return him to the State Legislature: the reason—for both his refusal to seek office again and for his heedless drive while in his legislative seat—was tragedy indeed.

He had, apparently, never ceased to mourn his lost Rachel. When busy on the floor of the House, trying cases in court between sessions—even when he was attending to the routine chores of law in his office in Boonville—he appeared to his many friends to be his old, capable self: nights, and at times when there was no immediate business to distract him, were likely very, very different.

He could not bring himself to campaign for re-election and, the distraction of politics gone, there was more time to brood: time gave no alleviation of his sorrow. Less than two years after his last impressive appearance on the floor of the Indiana State Legislature Captain Stephen Dial was dead—gone to join his lost Rachel.

The BOONVILLE ENQUIRER, January 8, 1876, reported:


"The remains of Capt. Stephen D. Dial, were interred, as announced in our last, on the 26th ult., at Wesley Chapel, about five miles from this place, attended by a large concourse of citizens. Captain Dial was about 51 years of age, and up to the time . . . of his death, was a man of strong mind and will. He had filled many places of honor, the last of which was that of Representative in the State Legislature from this county, in 1873. During the War, he served as Captain in the 12th Kentucky Cavalry, with marked distinction, proving himself a popular and brave soldier. In politics he was ever a fearless advocate of the principles of the Democratic party. He leaves a

family of well grown children, the mother of whom died about two years ago, and was a sister of Hon. Benoni S. Fuller."

And so passed Stephen Dial, an early Indianian of parts and of presence; a loving—too well loving, perhaps—husband; a patriot ready to risk his life; a good neighbor; a more than competent lawyer; a wise holder of public office. Apparently nothing ailed him more than acute sorrow resulting from his wife's death that lead him to drive himself beyond the capacity of his strength. As little as half a century later medical science could have helped him to rationalize his depression, to conquer it, and to live perhaps another quarter century of useful life.

Perhaps he went too soon, and unnecessarily, but he had served his country well in his comparatively brief life—and, after all, the literature of all the world has through milleniums honored him who "dies of love." That—regardless of what materialistic sentiments one may hold—Stephen D. Dial undoubtedly did.

V

F Isham Fuller's numerous progeny probably William Wilson, youngest, was least fortunate in the time and circumstances of his birth.

He was born at the Fuller farm, son of Isham Fuller's second wife, Agnes (Wilson) Fitzgerald Fuller, on July 29, 1857.¹

Isham Fuller, the father, died on February 14, 1858, when William Wilson was six and one-half months old. What Isham left in the way of an estate we cannot know. In his day local newspapers did not estimate a man's personal assets at or after the time of his death; not even court records show them, for in that happy time before inheritance taxes, such intimate details were no one's business, except the heirs'. Isham Fuller had been known as a prosperous citizen: exactly how prosperous he actually was, or how liquid his assets may have been, is a question. Warrick County farm land was far from the best in Indiana and it cost any honest man money to serve in the Indiana State Legislature—there were inevitably those congenitally worthless notes to be endorsed for constituents, even besides the time lost from attending to investments and profession or

1. Three different years, 1856, 1857 and 1858, are given by what should be reliable sources for William Wilson Fuller's birth. Two only are known to have been recorded by the man himself: when he enrolled at Indiana University he gave his birth year as 1857; when he reported for the census taken on June 30, 1880, he said he was twenty-two. On that day he would have been twenty-two years, eleven months and one day, using 1857 as the year of his birth: he must have been born in 1857.

trade. To a leading citizen there were also frequent calls for charitable contributions.

We do not know the value, at the time of his death, of Isham Fuller's assets but we do know that he had by his first wife three daughters and a son. By the custom of the time the daughters may be supposed each to have received some part of Isham's assets as dower. He also had three more children by his second wife—Hannah Mariah, Thomas Wilson and William Wilson—all born after 1852 (Isham and Agnes could not have been married before 1851) and hence all under six years of age at the time of their father's death.

No matter how industrious, how provident, Isham Fuller may have been in life it is not possible that he could have left an adequate endowment for all his children—plus the expenses resulting from the rearing of the four McMurtry orphans his first wife had brought him—by any honest means in the Indiana of that day. John Jacob Astor, New York operator in a field that included the whole continent, could scarcely have done it—and no sensible person would suggest that old John Jacob always employed honest means!

So Agnes Wilson Fitzgerald Fuller was left to support these three infants on her widow's share plus each child's portion of one-seventh of the balance that was due these children as their interest in that Warrick County farm—not the best even in southern Indiana—and whatever tag ends of investments in dubious enterprises and unliquid notes Isham's foray into politics had left to his estate. That was Agnes' condition at least until, on May 17, 1863, she married James Hinman. Hinman was a neighbor of the Fullers. Some time a widower he was the father of Lewis Hinman who had been the first husband of Isham Fuller's daughter Rachel—who was, of course, only a step-daughter to Agnes. Complicated relationships such as that often resulted in new farm communities.

James Hinman helped in the matters of food and clothing, and Agnes and her children moved to his farm, his own family being by then long since grown and out on its own. He must have been a thoroughly good man; he was accepted as a mem-

ber of the Fuller clan and was always referred in their reminiscence as "Uncle Jimmy."

Uncle Jimmy Hinman was far from wealthy and Agnes undoubtedly had a fairly hard life but she was first-generation Irish, a woman of strong mind who by tradition in the Indiana phrase "Didn't take nothin' from nobody" and she got her three orphans reared and schooled. Hannah Maria, Thomas, and William Wilson all did credit to her efforts.

Agnes and the children seem to have stayed together for some time, until at least as late as 1873, when William Wilson was sixteen and Thomas a year or two older. The boys completed the course offered in the local public school (an institution that their half-brother Benoni had helped to establish on a practical basis in Indiana) after which Thomas "read law" in some Boonville office while William, in 1874, went to Oakland City where he had a year's work in what was then the Oakland Normal Institute and later became Oakland City College. Having worked another year or so and saved a small stake, he went to Worthington, Indiana, where he attended the high school in that town through 1876.² Undoubtedly both Thomas and William Wilson had made their own way, or most of it, throughout the schooling they received beyond the primary grades.

William Wilson, fortified by this additional education not available in Boonville, readily secured a teaching position in the county. At his beginning in the profession he could have been no more than nineteen.

He taught at the grade school level for about five years, saving what he could of his meagre salary and filling in with work on the farm or elsewhere during vacation periods—in the summer of 1880, for instance, he sold mowing machines.³ Presently he had laid by enough to carry out his next aim.

Actually, his one year of normal training already put him above the average of Indiana teachers in professional prepara-

2. Fortune, Will—Warrick and Its Prominent People.

3. United States Census for 1880.

tion. As late as the 'Fifties in some parts of the state, *no* particular educational qualification was required to become a teacher. Ordinarily the candidate need only convince the elected Township Trustee (by no means always a literate man himself) or the school committee in a town, that he was competent. These gentry were not uncommonly interested, first, in whether the candidate could keep order, and, second, in how cheaply he would work: if he could also teach that was felt to be nice but not necessarily essential. Those laws proposed by Robert Dale Owen and Caleb Mills in the 'Fifties and later implemented through the efforts of Benoni S. Fuller and his friends had improved the situation somewhat. There was in William Wilson Fuller's day some state-wide regulation, through the elected State Superintendent of Schools and the County Superintendents. Well-qualified teachers were still very scarce.

But William Wilson Fuller, successful teacher though he had proved himself to be, was still not satisfied with his preparation. Taking his savings, he enrolled at Indiana University—a rather daring move for a country town teacher in those times—where he continued through the fall, winter and spring terms of the years 1880-81 or—we may guess—until his money ran out.⁴

Although he must have been a bit older than his classmates, he was sufficiently gregarious to take advantage of the benefits of extra-curricular activities. He joined the local Sigma Chi chapter and took an active part in debating and in the literary societies. Apparently he campaigned for public office in Warrick County while still attending classes at the University, for he was elected County Superintendent of Schools there and took office June 8, 1881, immediately after his final examinations at the University.

It is in this period that Mrs. Gertrude Moore, then a small girl, remembered him with his brothers Benoni and Thomas, as "the three most popular young men in our little town . . . loved by all who knew them." We get a glimpse of Thomas, the brilliant (if somewhat lazy) young lawyer and William,

4. Registrar's records, Indiana University.

County Superintendent of Schools, in a social item published in the Booneville paper on December 9th, 1882:

LITERARY SOCIETY

The following is the program for Saturday night, December 9th, 1882:

MUSIC Choir
DECLAMATION—

James Hemenway, Ella Macy and Ida Williams

SELECT READING—

Florence Puet, Joe Pickering and Prof. Emerson

SONG Mabel Oatley

MUSIC Choir

ESSAY.....Thomas Fuller and Mabel Oatley

DEBATE—Rev. Wolfe and Rev. Yates, *Aff.*

W. H. Stone and Dr. Hargan, *Neg.*

QUESTION: Resolved, that Christianity has done more to promote civilization in the United States than Science, Art, Law or Literature.

MUSIC Choir

JOHN L. TAYLOR, *Secretary* WILL. W. FULLER, President ⁵

—we may not envy President Fuller his duty in acting as chairman of that debate—undoubtedly a dry assignment—but the essay Thomas read, if it was up to his usual standard, probably furnished a bright note to lighten up the evening. Thomas, by that time, had a county-wide reputation as an orator. He loved to defend the undefendable, to champion the lost cause and his every court-room appearance drew a crowd. In routine matters of small town law-practice he had no interest whatever—and for that reason he soon got a reputation for laziness, though no one ever questioned his brilliance.

In 1885 William Wilson Fuller gave up education administration for a new profession, in the 'Eighties a booming one. A year or two before Selwyn A. Brant, a representative of the

5. Transcript in the ms. collection of Thomas Dillingham.

Goodspeed Company, a publishing house that specialized in the field of county histories, had come to Boonville for the purpose of writing that work which we have already quoted several times.⁶ Under the system he would have normally been required to sell subscriptions, to write biographical sketches of the subscribers or their ancestors and either to prevail upon some local historian to do the "history" of the county—preferably a judge or attorney—or to write it himself and get some responsible citizen to lend his name as author. In those days the county histories compiled by the big companies in the business usually depended for writing upon young fieldmen, such as Brant, rather than upon the illustrious and lettered gentlemen whose names appeared on the title pages.

Brant completed his assignment in Warrick County and the book was eventually published, as we know. But during Brant's residence in Boonville he and William Wilson Fuller met and became friends and Brant explained the ins and outs of the business to Fuller. He told him of the minor chicaneries sometimes perpetrated, and the two young men speculated on what the prospects might be if a firm, going into the field on a small scale, should write local history honestly, make no specious promises and deliver a reasonably scholarly work to subscribers, with its content not influenced by the number of copies bought by subjects or their descendants.

Brant, fed up with the Goodspeed organization, was ready to try; Fuller, who had a taste for writing, found the idea intriguing. Brant's commitment to Goodspeed being terminated, the two formed a partnership and the reliable BOONVILLE ENQUIRER (for October 31, 1885) gives us the result:

"Mr. W. W. Fuller left his old home last Monday for a new field of labor, with temporary headquarters at Seymour, [Ind.], having formed a partnership with Mr. S. A. Brant for the purpose of engaging in the publication of County Histories. Mr. Fuller was for more than four years Superintendent of the Schools of Warrick County, a position he resigned on the 1st

6. Do not confuse "Historian" Goodrich with "Publisher" Goodspeed.

of September last in order to engage in his new business. We are sorry to lose so valuable a citizen, but if must be, we submit.

"Mr. Brant is favorably known in this place. He wrote the history of this county that was recently delivered here, and his work has been received with satisfaction by our citizens. He has had several years experience in the business and understands it in all its details. They are both young men that we have no hesitancy to recommending in any community where they may work, as men that will fulfill all their promises. With Mr. Brant's former experience and knowledge of business, and Mr. Fuller's energy and qualifications to be an able assistant, we have no doubt of their prosperity and success."

The fact that Seymour was named as their headquarters indicates that their first project was to be a history of Jackson County, Indiana. Actual printing and binding was done in Madison, Wisconsin: "headquarters" was always the site of the current project. Brant knew his business as a promoter and the firm of Brant & Fuller found for itself some most lucrative clients; the histories compiled (and that was William Wilson Fuller's part of the business) were superior examples of their class.

As time went on Brant & Fuller published works on Washington, D.C., on a several-county section of the Carolinas, on a district in Alabama and on the Upper Ohio, the latter being one of their best efforts. In the late Eighteen-eighties they were back in Indiana, engaged on a history of Shelby County, with editorial headquarters in Shelbyville, the county seat.

Regardless of the success of their other projects, financial or literary, it was this Shelby County assignment that proved most important to the junior partner. While established in Shelbyville William Wilson Fuller met Minnie Lora Parrish. This young lady was the daughter of James Osborn and Adelia Frances Joyce Parrish (who, like the Fullers, came of North Carolina stock) and she had been born on October 18, 1868, in Brookville, Indiana, in which then important Indiana city her father kept a general store. When she was quite young her family moved north to Shelbyville. Presently James Parrish

was elected Treasurer of Shelby County, served two terms and, giving up politics, established a lumber business. That turned out to be a significant move, as far as his grandson and namesake was (and is) concerned.

Minnie Parrish graduated from Shelbyville High School in 1887 and had one year in Franklin College before the summer vacation in which she met William Wilson Fuller.

The courtship, as Minnie Lora Parrish Fuller recalls it, was purposeful and not long protracted: both parties were similarly stricken with the positiveness of their sentiments. They were married in 1890.

William Wilson Fuller and his young wife could not "set up housekeeping" because his headquarters were shifted too frequently. Best they could do was live in hotels or rooming houses (we must recall that in *those* days there were comfortable rooming and boarding houses) as they moved from place to place. Minnie Parrish Fuller, who was only twenty-two in 1890, recalls that she loved it. This was an existence often in metropolitan surroundings—compared to Shelbyville at least—for which two-thirds of the girls who had been her classmates at Franklin College would have at least considered selling their souls.

The discomfort of pregnancy might have been serious, under these circumstances of living, for those of Minnie Parrish Fuller's contemporaries who still cherished Victorian ideas of what constituted the "ladylike" but she took it all very calmly. Mrs. Fuller was—and is after eighty-nine years—a hearty, vivacious lady who is not easily dismayed; not in the least given to looking at life as anything but a challenging adventure.

The William Wilson Fuller's first child, christened William Parrish Fuller, was born on May 21, 1892, in Madison, Wisconsin, where his father was then engaged in preparing a history. Two years later Mrs. Fuller did consent to go to the home of her parents in Shelbyville to bear her second child, Virginia, but that was only for the reason that she needed the assistance of her mother to care for her two-year-old son, not in the least because she was losing her spirit. She has not lost that in 1958.

Within a short time the affairs of the Fullers took a turn which made Minnie Parrish Fuller's qualities of stamina and character most useful. During the years 1895-96 William Wilson Fuller suffered a series of what were then described as "light strokes" which incapacitated him completely for the concentrated effort and high-pressure work entailed in his business.

He was a young man—still under forty—and what were then adjudged "light strokes" were very likely something of which modern medicine could have cured him completely. In his day *rest* was prescribed and he and his wife and their two children came back to Shelbyville, where they bought a small cottage. As evidence of the success he had had as editor and publisher he also had about eight thousand dollars to invest, and in the 'Nineties eight thousand dollars in cash was a very respectable sum of money. While he never recovered fully, even for a time, from his original illness, the prescribed rest did improve his condition to a point that he could hope to make a successful working investment with his savings.

A friend persuaded the Fullers that in Chicago there existed exactly the sort of opportunity by which they could profit. The shoe department in The Fair Store of Chicago (then a leader in renown, at least, among cut-rate department stores) was for sale. In those days, as now, many such stores leased departments to outside owners on either a rental or a percentage basis: The Fair Store shoe department was operated thus and William Wilson Fuller bought it with his eight thousand dollars.

The shoe department may very well have been a good buy but The Fair Store itself was in serious trouble—as the "friend" of the Fullers who had recommended the investment and the previous owner of the shoe department may or may not have known. Very shortly after Fuller's purchase the great store was thrown into bankruptcy. Fuller's shoe department may have been solvent but—an occupant of space in an establishment that was being closed—this question was purely academic. William Wilson salvaged what few dollars he could from the forced sale of his stock under the least favorable conditions imaginable and after some weeks in Shelbyville, took his family back to

his old home town, where living expenses would be lower.

Naturally, whatever improvement in health he had enjoyed before had been sacrificed to the strains involved in this transaction; again, in 1901, William Fuller was almost a complete invalid.

In Boonville the Fullers found a cottage that suited their needs and, resting among old friends, William Wilson Fuller made some slight physical gain—though he did not recover to the point he had reached before, when he had entered upon the Chicago venture.⁷ Although he could survive only by spending most of his time in bed and by remaining in a darkened room nearly all the few hours he was allowed to be up and about, William Wilson Fuller always maintained his balance in talking to his family. He made no bones of the fact that he could not be a proper father to his children—at least the sort of father he had hoped to be—and that, if the family was to stay together, each of them would have to make what contribution he or she could. He made it clear to the children that he was sorry their mother had to work for money (she had begun immediately on arrival to give piano lessons, to take in the fanciest sewing that Boonville required, and to do a little cake-baking and catering for Boonville's rare social functions) but that she did and that was that! He said that while he had opened an insurance agency with a young relative he doubted that he would ever make much money by it, since he had to wait for customers to come to him, rather than going to visit the customers, as most agents did.

He explained his own condition as a misfortune they all had to face. There were no recriminations, no apologies: and by this attitude, as the subsequent record of his wife and children shows, he proved himself wise. He was probably made especially sensitive about his own unavoidable failure to provide for and to guide his children because he could never have known

7. This account of the business career of William Wilson Fuller after 1895-96 is taken from notes dictated by his widow, Mrs. Minnie Parrish Fuller, in 1955. It is entirely dependable and the only record of this period.

his own father, Isham—although he did take particular pains to tell his son all he had heard about that old gentleman's good life.

William Wilson Fuller probably suffered terribly when he felt it necessary to advise his son to begin selling the SATURDAY EVENING POST on Boonville street corners when the boy was only nine years of age: certainly, later, he hated to see young Parrish spend his after school hours operating a laundry route and adding in his five or six dollars a week profit to the family funds. We may be assured that William had a bad time when, at the age of fifteen, this son took a job in a nearby coal mine—even as he regretted the necessity that drove his handsome and cultured young wife to give music lessons, bake cakes for sale to the public, and take in sewing.

Nevertheless—with the enthusiastic cooperation of all its members—William Wilson Fuller kept his family together, except that, there being a better high school in Shelbyville, Minnie Parrish Fuller's home town, than there was in Boonville, he encouraged his son to live there with his maternal grandparents during the school year.

William Wilson Fuller succeeded in carrying on until the spring of 1912, when his increasing disability finally brought about his premature death, at the age of fifty-five.

His more perceptive friends recognized him as a man whose career had been blighted by a series of undeserved misfortunes like those on which the classic Grecian dramatists loved to base their tragedies. In 1927 Travis D. Scales, a companion of his boyhood, wrote of William Fuller to William's son: "Thanks for your gift and your letter . . . Your name takes me back many years to the best friend I ever had—your father, who had the most fertile mind and was the finest gentleman I ever knew . . ."

After her husband's death Minnie Parrish Fuller took her children back to Shelbyville: her father, before his passing in 1908, had prospered reasonably in the lumber business, but her mother was now alone. All three of the Fullers were wel-

come and we may be assured that, after their rigorous experience of the few preceeding years, they made themselves useful to the elderly Mrs. Parrish.

VI

THE obvious talents of the Fuller family have been passed on to further generations of men. WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA for 1957 lists Morse Grant Dial, a great-great-grandson, and Parrish Fuller, a great-grandson of Benjamin and Polly York Fuller. Dial is president of the Union Carbide Corporation, is one of the seventeen highest salaried executives in United States industry,¹ and has been elected one of the fifty "Foremost Leaders of American Industry" by a national poll of businessmen.² Fuller, an officer in several Southern lumber companies and a director of some major corporations, has made a hobby of the promotion of better educational facilities for American youth in both the North and South.

MORSE GRANT DIAL

Grant Dunnigan Dial, the only son of Captain Stephen and Rachel Dial, was a tall, handsome fellow of impressive bearing. He left Warrick County as a young man and became a traveling salesman for the New York firm of Morse & Rogers, shoe jobbers, in whose employ he continued for many years. Grant Dial was a remarkably good salesman.

In Chicago, his Midwestern headquarters, he first met Sarah Frances Newman, a young woman who was then studying music, and after a brief courtship they were married.

Sarah Frances was a charming and talented girl. In time and

1. TIME, issue of June 11, 1956.

2. The poll is taken by FORBES MAGAZINE every ten years.

under the press of necessity, she became an independent and a truly distinguished lady, in all that term can imply, and she continues so today—in her nintieth year as this is written.

Born in Independence, Iowa, March 24, 1867, she was the daughter of Laura Frances (Newell) and Seth Newman. Both parents were of old American stock that had moved westward with the frontier. About 1880, the Newmans went even farther west, to Fargo, Dakota Territory.

It was a fortunate move. The considerable talents of Seth Newman, a lawyer, were soon recognized in the new country. He became a leader in his profession and in civic affairs, served as President of his State Bar Association after the territory was divided and admitted to the Union and held the office of Mayor of Fargo as long as he would consent to be a candidate. When, in 1889, the Territory had been divided and was ready for statehood as North and South Dakota, he drafted most of the laws that made up North Dakota's original code at the time of its admission.

Mrs. Newman was also interested in public affairs and participated in them as much as a lady of her day could—while pursuing one of her several hobbies to become one of the new state's leading chess-players.

After the family's arrival at Fargo, the Newman's daughter, Sarah Frances, entered a local school and completed the preparatory education she had begun in Iowa. Then, in a move some of her contemporaries must have considered rather daring, she went back east to Chicago to concentrate on the study of music. It was during this Chicago interlude that she met and married Grant D. Dial.

The Grant Dunnigan Dials had two sons during their early married years. The eldest, Newman Dial, died at the age of four. The younger, Morse Grant Dial (he was named for Daniel Parmlee Morse, senior partner in his father's firm) born in 1895, survived to enjoy a brilliant career in business.

Morse G. Dial was no more than three years old when something happened to his parents' marriage. No one identifies the cause but it may well have been, as relatives suggest, simply a

case of incompatibility between two strong and independent characters. At any rate the Dials were divorced and Mrs. Dial took her small son and returned to Fargo.

As Morse G. Dial recalls it, he and his mother underwent no financial hardship. The Newmans were not wealthy, even by current standards, but Mr. Newman was a prominent citizen and the family was in very comfortable circumstances, able and willing to give assistance to a daughter and grandson.

Not much financial assistance was necessary: Sarah Frances Dial was well able to take care of herself, and did so.

At first she gave private lessons but, by 1903, she took up public school music teaching. Subsequently she became Supervisor of Music in various public school systems in Minnesota, California and Texas. During the school year her son stayed in Fargo with his grandparents. He admired both of them but he says, in his maturity, that his grandmother became "a great influence in my life."

His mother was aware of the necessity for graduate study, if she expected to progress in her field and, in spite of the financial responsibility involved in rearing a son, she resolved to continue the education that had been interrupted by her marriage. By attending summer sessions at Northwestern University through a period of years she completed her work and received her baccalaureate when in her middle forties: by further strenuous effort she earned a Master's degree in music from Columbia University—in her sixty-fifth year!

Sarah Newman Dial did not devote all her attention to music during her long career as a teacher: she also served as Dean of Women at the North Dakota Agricultural College for a time. In 1957 she still maintains an interest in all departments of education.³

Grant Dunnigan Dial married again, after his divorce, and fathered one son, Arthur Walton Dial, before a second divorce. In the early Nineteen-hundreds he died in San Antonio, Texas, where he had gone in hope of curing a respiratory disease. He

3. Ms. recollections written by Morse G. Dial, December 16, 1957.

was still a comparatively young man. Sarah Newman Dial, learning of his condition, went there to nurse him through his last illness—an action that not only demonstrates her own strength of character but also shows why she is so highly regarded by her one-time husband's family.

Similarities are immediately apparent in the careers of the wives of these two Benjamin Fuller descendants, Grant D. Dial and William W. Fuller: Minnie Parrish Fuller successfully undertook the support of her two children after her husband's physical incapacity left him unable to carry on: Grant Dunnigan Dial (with a similar Fuller heritage) had in Sarah Frances Newman, a wife competent not only to rear their one surviving son but also to make a distinguished career. Science does not recognize such traits, but we could suspect, from this evidence, that Fuller males apparently had a facility for marrying talented wives. Possibly Polly York, wife of Benjamin, made a similar contribution to the Fuller line: perhaps we have been tracing a heritage derived from Polly, rather than Benjamin!

Young Morse Grant Dial did what he could toward assisting himself and his mother. He took a "paper route" in Fargo at an early age—finally handling two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening: before he was in high school he had other jobs.

Beginning when he was thirteen, he says, "I started working on farms in North Dakota. That was relatively profitable employment in those days, as there were no expenses; little, if any, opportunity to spend money when earned and, consequently, when summer was over one's financial condition was pretty sound. I continued this through my first college years. I returned to North Dakota and worked on farms in the summer . . . at college I held various types of jobs around the campus, and was able to augment my allowance from my mother and grandmother."⁴

Having completed his preparatory work he enrolled at North Dakota Agricultural College but shortly transferred to Cornell

4. Ibid.

University to study mechanical engineering—a move by which, although of course he did not know it at the time, he greatly enriched the world's Twentieth Century economy!

Morse G. Dial does not admit the fact, but he must have been something of a "Big Man on Campus" at Cornell: contemporaries, fortunately, contribute the information that he was a member of Delta Upsilon social fraternity, of which he ultimately served as president, Crew Manager, and a member of Quill and Dagger.

Still an undergraduate, Morse Grant Dial enlisted in the United States Naval Air Corps in December, 1917. The service was in its very earliest days, as is evidenced by the fact that Dial, not called up until May, 1918, still had the serial number 1389, one that will appear extremely low to the scores—possibly hundreds—of thousands enrolled in that service since his day.

As a member of the corps he took his ground school training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (which had been taken over by the Aviation Department of the Navy), and had flight training at Key West, Miami, and Pensacola. When he was commissioned and received his wings in October, 1918, he was held over as an instructor at Pensacola and continued there until he was released early in 1919. Neither the competent Dial nor, (as we shall see) his equally qualified cousin Parrish Fuller were ever permitted to demonstrate their capacity: a sad commentary upon the management of World War I!

Dial returned to Cornell for the spring semester in 1919, continued his studies and received the Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering in 1920.

His first job after college was with his father's old employers, the shoe firm Morse & Rogers, which became a branch of the International Shoe Company. His next place was with the Brownville Board Company, manufacturers of manila board in Brownville, N. Y.

He married Miss Ethelyn Gamble and the couple has one son, Morse Grant Dial, Jr., two grandsons, Morse Grant III

and Taylor, and one granddaughter, Lindsey Taylor Dial.

Morse G. Dial made his first connection with the Union Carbide Corporation in 1929, when he became Sales Supervisor for the corporation's Pyrofax Gas subsidiary. The next year he was made manager of the Pyrofax Division, and thereafter he progressed through a number of the corporation's divisions. In 1934 he became manager of Vinylite at the time it was becoming one of the country's leading producers of plastics; in 1939 he was made Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer of Union Carbide and Secretary and Treasurer in 1945. He was made Vice President and a Director in 1949 and Executive Vice President and a member of the Executive Committee in 1951.

In 1952 Mr. Dial—whose talent and ability had been immediately and widely recognized in industry—became President of Union Carbide, an organization of which some of the principal divisions are Union Carbide Chemicals Company, Electro-Metalurgical Company, Haynes Stellite Company, Linde Air Products Company, National Carbon Company and the Kemet Company. With an annual sales total well over a billion dollars this organization has been one of the great factors in the rise of modern United States industry.

Articles in BUSINESS WEEK, TIME, FORTUNE and FORBES MAGAZINE⁵ in recent years have described the fabulous operations of the corporation—usually with a special commendation for its President. BUSINESS WEEK, particularly, lauds Mr. Dial's ability as an organizer and his special talent for delegating authority, points made by most authorities familiar with his career. TIME lists Dial as one of America's seventeen highest-salaried executives, and the second FORBES article (in an issue which carries his portrait as a cover picture) refers to him, in complimenting his company on its expansion program, as a "fiscal manager" who "has had few peers" and an "accomplished practitioner" of "the modern art of . . . management."

5. BUSINESS WEEK, Aug. 4, 1956; FORBES MAGAZINE, February, 1957, and April 1, 1958; TIME, October 31, 1955 and January 2, 1956.

Unquestionably this—still young as age goes today—descendant of Benjamin and Polly Fuller is one of the greatest in his field.⁶

Possibly because Dial's own reticence has prevented publication of any but the briefest sketches of his career, no periodical writer has as yet emphasized the background and preparation which undoubtedly contributed to his success. We have some hints as to what they were. First, he had a heritage of strong character; after that in importance came a taste of labor as a youth on the prairie farmlands of North Dakota, sound early guidance by a mother who had a deep appreciation of the fine arts but who was also a practical and thoroughly competent woman, an education in a branch of the sciences, experience in a new field of armed service and a good grounding in sales work at various levels. Morse Grant Dial should have been expected to become a man competent to guide one of the country's great industries: he has.

Fellow executives throughout the United States agree to that: in the last national poll conducted by *FORBES MAGAZINE*, he was named one of the fifty "Foremost Leaders of American Industry."

On June 12, 1954, he received the honorary Doctor of Engineering degree from Stevens Institute of Technology:

"An Engineer by education, an administrator by ability, this native of the Middle West has been spectacularly successful in combining both talents by becoming the chief executive of an industry whose very existence is predicated on technology and constant research.

"As president of Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation, he is the nerve center of a giant industrial hand whose five fingers produce unending streams of chemicals, metals, gases, carbon products and plastics, the fundamental building blocks of our technological society. The man who guides and controls so many diverse activities needs more than technical skill and

6. *FORBES MAGAZINE*, April 1, 1958.

executive ability. In his history we can see evidence of some of these other qualities.

"His spirit of courage and determination became apparent during his college years when he interrupted his engineering education at Cornell to serve, in 1917, as an ensign in the Air Arm of the United States Navy.

"His good sense and perseverance were demonstrated when he resumed his education after the war and went on to receive the degree of Mechanical Engineering.

"His leadership and ambition are amply proven by his rapid rise since joining Union Carbide in 1929, as the sales supervisor for a single product.

"His personal qualities of humanity and generosity are obvious to all who know him."

Stevens Institute is—for the benefit of readers unfamiliar with its traditions—not known among scholars as one that lightly grants honorary degrees, or inclines to unnecessarily fulsome eulogies: such a tribute from Stevens Institute carries weight.

Morse Grant Dial's business interests, outside the vast organization he heads so brilliantly, include a directorship in the Prudential Insurance Company of America and in the Fidelity-Phenix Fire Insurance Company. He is a trustee of the Hanover Bank, New York, and of Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc.

Dial has been active on the Cornell University Council and what he describes as "the usual church, hospital, and college affiliations" but his greatest effort in philanthropy thus far has been devoted to boys' club work.

When he first came to New York he became interested in this activity, and was leader of one of the Lower East Side Boys' Clubs until press of business no longer allowed him the time he believed the work deserved. Most young business men find themselves forced to desert some early hobbies in order to further their careers. Many later take them up again as soon as they find themselves in a position to call more of their time their own. Dial did just that: "Several years ago," he says,

"friends and acquaintances who had continued in this work brought me back to it. I again became active . . . I am convinced that it is worthwhile for the boys, and I know it is a rewarding experience for the participating sponsors."⁷ He now serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Boys' Clubs of America.

PARRISH FULLER

Parrish Fuller—whose introduction to business at the age of nine we have noted in the sketch of his father's life—attended Shelbyville High School three and a half years, living with his Parrish grandparents while school was in session. For a time after that he continued his work at the lumber yard, in which his grandmother had an interest after her husband's death, and where he had already been employed after school and on Saturdays, but in the fall of 1911 he enrolled as a student at Wabash College.

His chief object was to prepare himself scholastically for the United States Naval Academy to which his father—finding the name of Representative Benoni Fuller still carried weight in Washington—had gotten him the promise of an appointment. As we shall see, it was not academic difficulties that kept him out of the Academy: to his surprise he failed to pass the physical examination. That was undoubtedly an error on the part of the examining physician—since Mr. Fuller is now a remarkably youthful and robust gentleman well past the Navy's retirement age—but the failure would plague the rejected candidate for some time to come.

At Wabash he paid his way from savings and by money earned firing the furnace and working in the kitchen of his fraternity (Sigma Chi) but, having already had a taste of business activity in selling lumber to Shelby County farmers, these jobs seemed picayunish indeed. While still a Wabash student he tried selling shoes on various neighboring campuses and did quite well at it—although he later realized that his time might have been better spent on his studies—until his father's final

7. Ms. recollections of Morse G. Dial.

illness made it necessary for him to withdraw from college before the end of the spring semester of 1912.

After William Wilson Fuller's death Minnie Parrish Fuller and her daughter went back to Shelbyville to live; Parrish returned to the lumberyard and increased that institution's business substantially (he was made manager at about the time he was eligible to cast his first vote) until the United States entered World War I in 1916.

Young Fuller at once tried to enlist with his friends and contemporaries but he already had that Naval Academy rejection against him and, when he tried other branches of the service, he found himself turned down by all.

He wrote to every one of whom he had ever heard who might have influence, asking for admission to service—any kind of service—and, this not availing, he finally dipped into his own savings and made a trip to Washington. There he laid siege to the office of Indiana Senator Harry S. New, believed in Hoosierdom to be a Power. Senator New did have some influence in the Senate Committee on Military Affairs: he listened to the plea of his young Hoosier constituent and promised to get him assigned to some branch of that which later in World War II, came to be called "limited service." That was in the year 1918.

Though Senator New must obviously have remembered his promise, not even he could cut through the comparatively uncomplicated red-tape of his day. Nothing happened for a long, long time.

Fuller was eventually commissioned—on the basis of his commercial experience and knowledge of the lumber business—a Second Lieutenant in the Signal Corps: that commission came through in *February, 1919*—at a time when the war had officially been over some three months and when a large percentage of United States combatants had already returned from Europe and were either back at their old jobs or looking for others!

Naturally, Fuller was no longer interested in helping to defend a country that was safely victorious: he turned down the

proffered Second Lieutenancy: his grandmother's lumber yard now obviously needed his services more than did President Wilson.

Parrish Fuller had done quite well at the business, in spite of the time he wasted calling on Indiana law-makers and writing letters of supplication: he had introduced modern sales procedures, had seen them work out and now—the war ended—he felt himself ready for broader fields. Mr. Julius W. Pinnell, who owned the balance of stock in the Parrish Shelbyville yard (along with similar interests in several others located in Indiana county seat towns) advised him to go to the under-developed South, where resources were more plentiful than the supply of energetic young men.

Through his experience in buying Southern lumber for the family yard, young Fuller had met the founders of the Louisiana Hillyer Deutsch Edwards Company, lumber producers. Following Mr. Pinnell's superior advice, he went South, called on them, applied for a job and was immediately accepted. That was early in the year 1919.

On October 18, 1919, he married Hester Porter, a charming, black-eyed, raven-haired daughter of Shelbyville, Indiana, and the couple set up housekeeping in the then quite primitive backwoods village of Oakdale, Louisiana. Their combined efforts through the years since have helped to develop Oakdale into a model Southern industrial community. Now—1958—the Fullers have two grown children, Mary Margaret (Mrs. James D. Voorhees) and William Porter Fuller.

Fuller's career in Louisiana was well summarized by Jack Gould, a Baton Rouge contributor to the International News Service, in a feature piece dated June 17, 1954. Mr. Gould wrote:

"Parrish Fuller, eminent Louisiana businessman, educator and civic leader, with Judge David W. Peck, Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court, Appellate Division, of New York, was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, at its 116th Commencement Exercises on Sunday, June Sixth. Mr. Fuller's award was in

recognition of his quarter of a century's work in the field of education, particularly as an elective member of the Louisiana State Board of Education, as well as in recognition of his distinguished service in public affairs.

"In the field of education, Mr. Fuller served as an elected member of the Board of Education of Louisiana for twenty-four years, concluding it as the Board's sixth President. The Board is the policy-making body for the Louisiana public school system and the administrative authority for seven colleges, one university, school for the deaf, the blind and the spastic, and twenty-five trade schools. Mr. Fuller served as the education member on a Governor's special commission to study Negro juvenile delinquency problems, which resulted in the establishment of the school for Spastic Children in Alexandria.

"In recognition of his public service, Southern University and A & M College, at a Parrish Fuller Day in 1952, conferred its first Distinguished Public Service Citation: in appreciation of his active interest in the educational development of the boys and girls of Louisiana, McNeese State College set aside its 1952 Homecoming festivities to honor him . . ."

The Louisiana Council of College Presidents also bestowed a distinguished public service citation on him, the text of which ran:

"RESOLUTION

"Whereas, The Honorable Parrish Fuller of Oakdale, Louisiana, has served continuously for twenty-three years as a member of the State Board of Education from the Seventh Congressional District of Louisiana, and

"Whereas, During the last year of his tenure he was signally honored by being elected president of the State Board of Education, and

"Whereas, During his tenure the public schools, the colleges, and the special schools under the State Board of Education have made tremendous progress in academic standards, physical plants, and general efficiency, and

"Whereas, His leadership and his vision have been both stabilizing and guiding influences in this development, and

ERRATA

The passage beginning with line 13, p. 134 should read:

“delinquency problems, which resulted in the establishing of the state industrial schools. He was also a leader in the establishment of the School for Spastic Children in Alexandria,”



"Whereas, His preeminence in the fields of industry, civic enterprises, and national war efforts are recognized in "Who's Who in America" and other important publications and by official government citation, and

"Whereas, the school personnel of Louisiana have benefited immeasurably from his counsel and his support of their interests,

"Therefore, Be it resolved that we, the presidents of all the state colleges and the special schools under the State Board of Education, hereby express our sincerest appreciation and our deepest gratitude for his notable achievements, and that we wish for him many more years of service in the educational, industrial, and civic development of Louisiana and the Nation.

"Thus done, read, and signed on this the seventeenth day of December in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-two.

"R. L. Ropp, President, Louisiana Polytechnic Institute; Lether E. Frazar, President, McNeese State College; Lewis C. Slater, President, Northeast Louisiana State College; H. Lee Prather, President, Northwestern State College; Clark L. Barrow, President, Southeastern Louisiana College; Joel L. Fletcher, Jr., President, Southwestern Louisiana College; R. W. E. Jones, President, Grambling College; Felton C. Clark, President, Southern University Agricultural and Mechanical College; W. Crabin Gill, President, Louisiana State School for the Blind; John Patton, President, Louisiana State School for the Deaf; Wade H. Davis, President, State School for Spastic Children."

Mr. Gould's article continued:

"Among Mr. Fuller's contributions to public affairs other than education, those on which he concentrated intense effort were related to World War II. Mr. Fuller served as State Salvage Chairman and was State Chairman of the Second War Loan Drive. When all of the agencies, such as Navy Relief, USO, etc., were consolidated, he served as Chairman of the State United War Fund. Because of his ability to handle intricate organization on a state-wide basis and to provide enthusiastic leadership, his work in the three vital efforts was so successful

that the Louisiana State Veterans of Foreign Wars awarded him their Fourteenth Good Citizenship Medal.

"In addition to his Oakdale interests in Hillyer Deutsch Edwards and the Heflands & Avoyelles Timber Company, Mr. Fuller's wide business affiliations include: Director and Chairman of Policy Committee, Celotex Corporation: Director of the New Orleans & Lower Coast Railroad and of the Canton & Carthage Railroad and Director of the National Bank of Commerce in New Orleans.

"At the present time, Mr. Fuller is a member of the Board of Visitors of Tulane University, a Trustee of Wabash College and member of its Policy Committee, a member of the Board of Governors of Ochsner Medical Foundation, and has been recently appointed to the Governor's eleven member commission to make a study of higher education in Louisiana."

On March 27, 1958, Parrish Fuller was elected president of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, a body whose object the chairman describes as "the gradual uplifting of the governmental literacy of the people of Louisiana."

Many state newspapers ran editorials lauding the Council's work and its choice of Fuller as president. A typical one, from the SHREVEPORT TIMES of March 31st, stated, in part:

"EXCELLENT CHOICE MADE BY P A R

"The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana has made an excellent selection in naming Parrish Fuller of Oakdale as its new president.

"Mr. Fuller for many, many years has been an outstanding leader in things that are good for Louisiana—good government, good educational systems, good steps toward general welfare and prosperity for the people as a whole. He has given unselfishly of his time and capabilities—and in certain specific projects—of his personal wealth in behalf of this state and its people. . . .

"P A R has been especially effective on informing the people on important public problems during Mr. [Joe D.] Smith's tenure as president. That has been particularly true in the field

of education, including the teacher's salary problem, the cost of free school lunches, the need and desire for better education in the smaller schools. In addition, P A R has made the publicized informative studies on many phases of state government, particularly taxation.

"All of this is certain to be carried on in expanded and even more beneficial manner under Parrish Fuller. He is a worthy successor to a worthy predecessor."⁸

A column syndicated in several leading Louisiana newspapers commented, on the subject of state government, "One of the most influential men around the legislature probably will be a business man, Parrish Fuller of Oakdale, lumberman, who has several times declined to run for governor. He is the new president of the Public Affairs Council, which he helped to organize."


Certainly Parrish Fuller's disappointment at his own failure to secure a baccalaureate in course should be mitigated by these many recognitions of his efforts toward providing educational opportunity for modern young people of all colors and circumstances—and good government in general for Louisiana, his adopted state.

Benjamin and Polly York Fuller did not make their full contribution to the national good when they carved a home out of the North Carolina back country. The seed they passed on to their brood of husky, independent, children continues to bear fruit in a society they could not conceivably have imagined in their wildest dreams.

8. SHREVEPORT (La.) TIMES, March 31, 1958.

APPENDIX I

REGARDING THE DISPUTED MATTER OF BENJAMIN FULLER'S REVOLUTIONARY SERVICE.

HARLES Clinton Shearer and William Warren Johnson, whose data submitted when they applied for membership in the Sons of the American Revolution is to be considered here, were both proved descendants of the Benjamin Fuller whose life we have investigated.¹

Judge Shearer gave his ancestral line as;
Charles Clinton Shearer,
Son of John and Mary E. Fuller Shearer,
Grandson of William and Elizabeth Richards Fuller,
Great-grandson of Benjamin Fuller
—which is entirely correct. The only question is whether this Benjamin of North Carolina actually served in the American Revolution as a private in Graham's New York Regiment, as Shearer further claimed.

It seems most likely that Shearer has confused his great-grandfather with another Benjamin Fuller—there were nineteen of that name in the American forces—who was definitely a veteran and who received a pension for service but who lived and died *in New York State*. Shearer's real ancestor always de-

1. The data the two reported is taken from photostats of their applications in the official files in the Society of Sons of the American Revolution, verified by reference to Directories of members, published at various dates by the Society.

scribed himself as a "North Carolinian;" he was married there in 1787, was living there when Shearer's grandfather, William Fuller, was born in 1797 and only moved to Ohio in 1828, where he lived until his death in 1848.

How the second family applicant for membership in the Sons of the American Revolution, William Warren Johnson, managed to take Judge Shearer's simple genealogy as a guide and then elaborate and confuse it as he did is not readily conceivable. He and Shearer were cousins, his great-grandfather Gideon having been brother to Shearer's grandfather William. Gideon and William were, of course, sons of the North Carolina Benjamin. Where Johnson got his additional and (obviously erroneous) data is not known since he gives Shearer and the United States Pension Rolls as his authority, but this is the genealogical chart that *he* submitted;

William Warren Johnson,

Son of Jesse F. Johnson (born June 6, 1827, died Mch. 3, 1891) and Amy Fuller Johnson (born Aug. 14, 1834, died Dec. 3, 1919),

Grandson of John Fuller (born Feb. 3, 1814, died ?) and Hannah Smith Fuller.

Great-grandson of Gideon Moody Fuller (born June 20, 1788, died ?) and Amy Soloman Fuller.

Great-great-grandson of Benjamin Fuller Jr. [sic] (born? died, Sept., 1848) and Polly York Fuller.

Great-great-great-grandson of Benjamin Fuller (born Apr. 22, 1762, died Aug. 10, 1837) and Betsey, last name unknown.

This Benjamin (Johnson has it) was a soldier in a Capt. Adiel Sherwood's New York Levies in the American Revolution.

Had Johnson not added this extra data to his application there would have been no reason to investigate either his or Shearer's claims.

Johnson states (correctly) that his great-grandfather, Gideon, was born in 1788. He did not know (or didn't choose to record) the birth date of his great-great-grandfather—whom he calls Benjamin "Jr."—but he says that man's father, Benjamin "Sr."

was born in 1762. We know that the *real* Benjamin—"Jr." or not—was born in 1765, and thus Johnson's data gives the following rather startling sequence:

- 1) The alleged Benjamin Fuller "Sr." was born in 1762,
- 2) His son, Benjamin "Jr." was born in 1765 (!)
- 3) His grandson, Gideon, was born in 1788.

—a remarkable record for Benjamin "Sr." both as father and grandfather and an item which should be called to the attention of the well known Mr. Ripley!

What apparently happened was that Judge Shearer—probably by accident—appropriated that army service record of a Benjamin Fuller of New York state and awarded it to the North Carolina Benjamin Fuller who was his own ancestor. When Cousin Johnson's time to file his application came he realized (probably from family tradition) that Shearer was in error, so he grafted on to the line another and extraneous Benjamin to whom *he* assigned the New York military record.

Louisa J. Fuller Morgan, who has been quoted before as the only contemporary of our Benjamin's who left any written memoranda about him, knew him well in her girlhood and admired him greatly. She made no mention of his having served in the American Revolution—an episode that would certainly have impressed her, had it occurred. If there was such a veteran in the direct family line it must have been our Benjamin's father—but we can at least be sure that he was *not* born in 1762!

There was indeed that older Benjamin who had been in North Carolina since at least 1763. He need not have been too old for Revolutionary War service but why should he have been drafted ("levied," they called it then) into a New York regiment? We know he could have been born no later than 1742; we can be sure that he died before 1848—but *could* he have gone to New York state, for some reason, before 1780, and could he have stayed in the North at least part of the time after the war was over?

Remember, both this older Benjamin and his father, Ezekiel, had disappeared from Granville County before the Census of 1790 was taken.

Just for our confusion, apparently, there was living in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, in 1790 one of the proved veteran "Benjamin Fullers" (Hampshire County is only a matter of thirty or thirty-five miles from Livingston Manor, New York, where Johnson thought *his* Revolutionary Benjamin resided) but there would be little reason to think this Hampshire County Benjamin had any connection with our line except for one strange thing:

Also in Hampshire County there resided in 1790 a man named *Gideon Moody*.¹

Now "Gideon Moody" is not a common name² but *our* North Carolina Benjamin and his wife Polly York Fuller named their first son, born in Granville County in 1788, *Gideon Moody Fuller*. Can that be simple coincidence?

If we may be permitted here to undertake a bit of very dangerous speculation we might suggest a reconstruction like this:

1) Ezekiel Fuller was a landholder in North Carolina. (That is a fact.)

2) Somewhere about 1740 there was born to him a son named Benjamin. This son himself began to buy up land in 1763 and continued to buy and sell until the 1780's (That, too, is fact.)

Now we speculate.

Could *this* Benjamin have married a lady named Betsey Moody who had a brother or a father named Gideon Moody? Could they have had a son in 1765 whom they named Benjamin? Could the family have moved to New York state before the Revolution and could the father have joined a New York regiment for service in the Revolutionary War?

3) After the war could their son, the younger Benjamin, have decided on impulse to go back to the old family home in North Carolina to try his luck? Could it have been *he*

1. Census of 1790 for Hampshire County, Mass.

2. In the next century there was to be a prominent Gideon Moody in the west but he derived *his* given name from his mother's people, not the Moodys, and there is no necessary connection.

who there married Polly York and settled down to stay?

4) Could it have been that, before 1790, the elder Benjamin and his wife removed to Hampshire County, Massachussets, where the wife's brother (or possibly uncle or father) Gideon Moody was already settled? And could *they* have influenced their son and daughter-in-law to name their first-born after their friend Moody?

—that's all supposition, pure and simple. Too bad that it fits so nicely, yet is not susceptible of proof, isn't it?

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